

UGA/RLS News - Spring 2007

Hello from Bulldog Town! As we close the book on spring semester 2007, we have been enjoying some of the glorious weather for which this part of the world is well known (at least at this time of year!). We hope things are equally delightful wherever you are and that the summer ahead offers ample opportunity for more of the same.

Since the newsletter was sent last fall, we have had a number of new developments and have heard from some folks that we hadn't heard from in awhile. The university **program review** was completed in the fall and the report was revised slightly in anticipation of a meeting with upper administration to occur in June. While the report noted that the program was understaffed for purposes of managing degree programs at three levels, they found the program to be sound in virtually all respects, having successfully negotiated the challenges associated with the College of Education's reorganization, and they recommended an increase in staffing. They also lauded department faculty for continued research productivity and professional visibility.

RLS Program News

It is with very mixed feelings that we announce the departure of one of the mainstays of our undergraduate program, **Katie Bemisderfer**. She was recently offered a position as an academic advisor with the Honors Program on campus and has decided to take it. It is a nice opportunity for her and we wish her well. She wanted students past and present to know "how much I have enjoyed working with them these past 17 years." She is flanked in the following picture by graduating TR students Ashley Jackson (on left), Emily Kennedy and Angie Nicovich (right). Her contributions to the program - as a project director first with the federal grants that John Dattilo received and then as an instructor, advisor and undergraduate coordinator - have been just outstanding. We will surely miss you, Katie. Fortunately you won't be far away!



Corey Johnson and **Gwynn Powell** completed a comprehensive overhaul of the undergraduate curriculum, introducing a Marketing and Finance course among many other changes.

Jordan Sasser and **Heidi Hunt** are co-recipients of the Edie Klein Leadership Award

Molly Moore and **Catie Beaulieu** have both been awarded Barbara Rankin Scholarships related to their interests and achievement in the area of outdoor education.

Undergraduates **Josh Little** and **Katherine Cash** attended the Edith Upchurch Innovative Programming conference at Rock Eagle in March, while **Drew Ward**, **Heidi Hunt**, **Kyle Erickson** and attended GRPA's "Beyond the Basics" Workshop.

Crista Myers and **Gwynn Powell** presented a Risk Management session at the Southeastern Fall Conference of the American Camp Association in Charlotte, NC.

Students from the Fall Semester Programming Course provided programs at the Clarke County Alternative Middle/High School, Gaines Elementary Afterschool Program, Boys and Girls Club (with leadership from Alum Derrick Floyd), and Grandview Care Center, while students in the spring semester Advance Program and Event Management Course provided programs for Gaines Elementary School, Augusta Youth Detention Center, Bear Hollow Zoo, ACC-LS Eco-Adventure (with leadership from Alumna **Carly Robinson**), Autism Society and UGA Soccer Team.

We were pleased to receive visits from several alums as panels for undergraduate courses this year. **Anand Suthar**, **Sharon Gillespie**, **Stacey Farrell**, **Colt Green**, **Chris Scollay**, **Eve Anthony**, **Derrick Floyd**. Please let us know if you would be interested in visiting this year.

We enjoyed a visit from several alums and GRPA leaders when GRPA hosted a student

cook-out on campus to help students learn more about the association and the profession. **Colt Green** donated a grill to the department for use at future cook-outs! Visit the GRPA website and look in the gallery for pics of the event. (<http://www.grpa.org/gallery.php?gallery=12>).

Other Faculty and Staff News

Gwynn Powell was elected to the National Board of the American Camp Association. She will return to Russia this summer with the Study Abroad Program, Camp Counselors Russia (www.uga.edu/russiaccamps). RLST undergrads Colt Miley and Cory Peppers will join other UGA undergrads on the adventure.

Corey Johnson has just completed his first year at UGA, which included a slew of new course preps, having an article accepted for publication in *Leisure Sciences* and presenting two papers at national conferences. To celebrate such a productive year he abandoned Athens for two long weeks to visit the Amazon rainforest. He will need the respite too, because when returns he will continue working on the two grants he secured this year: a Scholarship of Engagement Grant which focuses on addressing the needs of LGBT youth in Georgia Detention Facilities; and the College of Education Early Faculty Grant to support his continued inquiry into the relationship between media consumption, race and masculinity for young men. Finally, to keep him on his toes, he also will begin a stint as Program Coordinator for RLS in the Fall.

Doug Kleiber, who recently completed a study leave at Clemson University, was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Academy of Leisure Sciences. He is currently working on a revision of his book with Roger Mannell, *A Social Psychology of Leisure* for Venture Press.

Diane Samdahl was elected President of the College of Education Faculty Senate at UGA. This past year she had a contract with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice that funded a graduate student to provide recreation programs for youth at the Augusta detention facility. In July she will travel to Eastbourne, UK, to present a paper at the British Leisure Studies Association conference on volunteer pet rescue operations that arose in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Michael Tarrant, now in the Warnell College of Natural and Forest Resources at UGA but still an adjunct professor with RLS, was one of three recipients of the University's Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professorships.

Jane Russell, another adjunct faculty member in RLS, recently retired as Director of Recreational Sports and the Ramsey Student Center for Physical Activities at UGA. In addition to continuing volunteer work with the Red Cross, she will teach a course on marketing for RLS in the fall.

Recent Graduates and Current Students

Ashley Jackson, Emily Kennedy and **Angie Nicovich**, pictured above with Katie B, are among those graduating in May with a Bachelor's degree in RLS. Kennedy and Nicovich will begin a masters program in therapeutic recreation at the University of Tennessee in the fall.

Congratulations to **Matt Delorey, Crista Myers, and Matt Pearce** who received their M.Ed. in May, and to **Paul Schlag** who was awarded a Ph.D. Paul is on the faculty as an assistant professor at Eastern Illinois University. Crista bought a house near State College, PA, and will be getting married this fall. Matt D. and Matt P. are actively seeking positions in community recreation and campus recreation, respectively..

Graduate students who graduated in December with M.Ed. degrees included **Jacquelyn Simmons** and **Luke Franklin**. Jacquelyn is in Atlanta beginning her career in hospitality services as Social Sales Manager at the Doubletree Atlanta Hotel, and Luke reported that he skied every day of skiing season at the resort near Lake Tahoe where he is working.

"Study on Media Sports: Focus on Internet Sports" is the title of a paper by current doctoral student **Sunhwan Hwang** that was accepted for the Korean Contents Association conference to be held this June in Seoul, South Korea! Sunhwan and **Rudy Dunlap**, another RLST doc student, have also had papers accepted for the Leisure Research Symposium at NRPA in Indianapolis in September. Dunlap also received the Kinesiology Summer Research Assistantship Award from the College of Education to support his summer fieldwork

Doctoral student, Terri **Phoenix** has been appointed recently to the position of Director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Center at UNC-Chapel Hill. She also has a manuscript being published in September by the Princeton Review.

Heather Reel, a current doctoral student and instructor in RLS, received an Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant award. She was recognized in Honors Day ceremonies on campus. She also received a dissertation research award from the Graduate School

Doctoral student, **Jaret Walton**, pointed out that contrary to the way we listed it last fall, she is an assistant professor at Shaw University in Raleigh, NC. She can be contacted at jwalton@shawu.edu.

Alumni

Katie Bourke (B.S.Ed. '05) has been promoted to communications coordinator with the Newland Community Foundation that she had been working with in Flowery Branch. Her new position at Estrella Mountain Ranch is in Scottsdale, Arizona. She notes that "Newland communities are resort style communities that offer recreational facilities as part of their amenities." Her job entails mostly PR through publications and the intranet

for a 3,000 (50,000 at build out) home community! Katie also had an update on classmate, **Trevor Childress** (B.S.Ed '05), former president of the RLS student club at UGA. She said that Trevor and his girlfriend, Ann Gilbert, are making a bike trek - tandem! - across the entire southern half of the United States. *I had the pleasure of hosting the two at my apartment in Scottsdale on Thursday, Feb. 1st to provide some much needed warm shelter and home cooked food. I was curious if the two were feeling weaker or stronger since their first mile. They both commented that they were feeling strong. Their muscles were doing the work for them and they were feeling healthier than ever. Scottsdale marked their 480 miles since they inaugurated the trip in San Diego on Tuesday, January 23rd, 2007. After having 9 flat tires, they visited Bob's Bike shop in Scottsdale and got some expert advice on the tires they had been using. Now fully loaded with stronger tires and nutrient fuel, they should be good to go for the next few hundred miles. Their next major stop was El Paso, which they should be making today, Monday, February 5th or tomorrow, February 6th. This leg of the trip will be their highest elevation change, and the most difficult. This is truly an amazing task that the two are completing. I wanted to ask everyone to keep Ann Gilbert and Trevor in your prayers as they make their journey for the East Coast.*

Angela Cobbs Meadows (M.Ed. 04) is a Victim/Witness Counselor with the 7th Circuit Solicitor's Office in Spartanburg, SC.

Suzanne Davis (B.S.Ed. '96, CPRP) is now the director for the City of Albany Recreation and Parks. She was previously the Director of Parks & Recreation for Putnam County, Florida (for the last 5 years). Although I am very excited to be back in Georgia, she already miss my FRPA friends. Suzanne had a 6 year old daughter and is closing ion on completing a masters degree in public administration. She can be reached at sudavis@dougherty.ga.us.

Billy Galt (B.S.Ed. '98) has been a Facilities Analyst for the Department of University Housing at UGA for the last two years after working for several years with Campus Recreation. He the work order data base, a key data base, and takes care of the department's architectural plans library. (billyg@uga.edu)

Gary Green (Ed.D. '00) received one of two Outstanding Teaching Awards given by the Warnell School of Natural and Forest Resources at UGA. He is an assistant professor in their WSFR Recreation Resource and Tourism Management program.

Grayson Ann Day was born to **Maradare Henderson Day** (M.Ed. '02) and her husband, Cal on April 26th. Congratulations to Maradare and family.

Joy James (B.S.Ed. '88) has accepted a tenure-track position at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. While she enjoyed her time at Slippery Rock in PA, she is looking forward to being closer to family back in the Southeast. Joy was the RLS Outstanding undergraduate in 1988.

Stephen Jessup (B.S.Ed) was just elected to a 10th term as a county commissioner in McIntosh County.

Tracy Jones (B.S.Ed. '03, CTRS). Has recently started a new job as a recreation therapist with Bay Pines VA Medical Center in Bay Pines, FL.

Linda Kotowski (M.Ed. '73) received a presidential Citation from the National Recreation and Park Association in 2006 for Significant Professional Contributions in her role as Recreation Administrator for the City of Aurora, Colorado.

Becky Kelley (B.S.Ed.) is Director of the Recreation, Parks & Historic Sites Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources based in Atlanta.

Beth Kivel (Ed.D. '96) was recently promoted to the rank of associate professor at California State University, Sacramento. She also serves as chair of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies there, as an associate editor for *Leisure Sciences*, as vice-chair of the California Foundation for Parks and Recreation Scholarship Committee and was recently appointed by Sacramento Mayor Heather Fargo to sit on the Oak Park Redevelopment Advisory Committee which oversees the distribution of \$20 million in redevelopment funds in this community, the oldest subdivision in Sacramento. She adds that "Most of the work I've been doing focuses on 'successfully' negotiating internal campus politics for which I believe I should receive some award and/or a gigantic stipend, neither of which will be forthcoming."

Angela Loucks Atkinson is an assistant professor at Memorial University in St. Johns, Newfoundland, Canada.

Dan Mathews (M.Ed. '94, CTRS) and wife Heather are pleased to welcome a new family member...Hannah Marie was born on April 23rd. And Mary Katherine loves being the big sister!

Sharon Peterson Gillespie (B.S.Ed. '98; M.Ed. 05) and her husband Jason are proud parents of Carter Reed Gillespie. He was born on January 27 and weighed in at 9 pounds, 9 ounces. After two years working in event management at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education, Sharon and family will be relocating this summer. We will miss them.

Joy Pokalba Byers (M. Ed. 0x) reports that she is maintaining the delicate balance of being a mom and a professional, working still as the Assistant Director of Programs and Special Events for Campus Recreation at Youngstown State University. She was also recently elected as the 2007-2009 President for the Ohio Recreation Sports Association. (E-mail:jlbyers@ysu.edu).

Heather Purdin (M.Ed. '06) took a bit of time out while pursuing a second masters – a Master of Arts in Community Counseling with a concentration in Expressive Arts Therapy at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. - to record a demo as an aspiring singer songwriter. As a result, she will shortly be signing a contract to make a full length

album. Find out more from her website: <http://www.myspace.com/heatherpurdin> . She also passed the NCTRC exam, presented a workshop (on Nuci's Space) at the North Carolina Counseling Association Conference in Durham, NC in February, and was a coauthor of three papers (on music and art therapy) presented to the 2007 Keele University Counseling Conference in Stafford, England. Partly as a result of these activities (not her music!) she was awarded an Alumni Scholarship from the ASU graduate school for the 2007-2008 academic year.

Kat Shreve (B.S.Ed. '91) received the Distinguished Service Award from the American Camp Association Southeastern section.

Tracey Tallent (B.S.Ed. '01) was recently presented with the Special Olympics Local Coordinator Award for the State of Georgia by the national Special Olympics Association.

Joe Wassif (M.Ed. '05) is working as a recreation therapist with Montana Academy, a "Second Nature" type therapeutic outdoor adventure program for at-risk youth.

Matt Weneta (M.Ed. '06) is the Program Director for Blackwater Outdoor Experiences in Virginia

Mike Wilcox (B.S.Ed. '06) has recently accepted a position as Information and Systems Analyst for Athens Regional Medical Center. He had been working there for several years as an x-Ray technician prior to his promotion and while completing his degree work in therapeutic recreation. He turns 30 this month!

Richard Williams (M.A '96, Ed.D. '00) was promoted to associate professor and tenured recently at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC.

Brent D. Wolfe (MA '02, Ph.D '04, CTRS) is leaving the University of Southern Mississippi University where he has been an assistant professor for three years, to assume a similar position at Georgia Southern University. While at USM he and **Gregor Kay** (Ed.D. '06) developed an award winning inclusion adventure program, "Access Recreation" (<http://www.usm.edu/~recinclusion/>) that was recognized by NRPA in it "Excellence in Inclusion" category at its annual conference last October in Seattle. Brent can be reached at wolfe.brent@gmail.com.