

**The University of Montana Western  
Academic Newsletter  
Academic Year 2009-10, Block 6 Issue  
February 25, 2010**

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**



During Block 5, Dr. Sheila Roberts and her husband, Tom Satterly (Environmental Sciences Department), traveled to the volcanic island nation of Grenada, in the southeastern Caribbean, where Sheila was a Visiting Professor of Geology at St. George's University. Dr. Andrea Easterpilcher, who was a Professor of Biology at MontanaWestern for 12 years before she and her family moved to Grenada last year, arranged the visit. Dr. Easter-Pilcher is now Professor of Biology and Chair of the Life Sciences Department in the School of Arts and Sciences at St. George's University.

While in Grenada, Dr. Roberts lectured on the geology of Grenada and the Caribbean region in two classes (Natural History of Grenada and Conservation Biology). She also led two Saturday field trips for students and faculty, and delivered a workshop on landslide causes and remediation for the community of Victoria in northeastern Grenada. Grenada suffered massive vegetation loss during hurricanes in 2004 and 2005 and landslides have become a serious issue as a result. St. George's Business Professor, Reesia Clark, Professor Easter-Pilcher, and Professor Roberts also submitted a grant proposal to assist the rehabilitation of agriculture and creation of an ecotourism industry in the same community.

During Block 7 this spring, Dr. Jack Kirkley, Biology Professor at Montana Western, will also travel to Grenada as a Visiting Professor at St. George's University, and other exchange opportunities for Montana Western professors are being planned.

*Photographs:*

*Dr. Roberts leading a field trip with students from the Natural History of Grenada class. The southern tip of Grenada is dry, while most of the rest of the island has a wetter tropical climate (about 12° latitude). The rocks at this beach site were primarily volcanic mudflows.*

*Emily, Brian, and Andrea Easter-Pilcher send their greetings to all their friends at Western.*

*Tom on February 6, celebrating Grenada Independence Day wearing the colors of their flag.*

Dr. Craig Zaspel and colleagues recently had an article accepted for publication in the Russian journal: *Zhurnal Eksperimental'noi i Teoreticheskoi Fiziki*, which is the top Russian journal and published in Moscow. Co authors are B. A. Ivanov from the Institute of Magnetism of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences as well as others from the Russian Academy of Sciences. The translated-from-Russian title is: "Non-Newtonian Dynamics of Magnetic Vortices." The researchers are currently interested in magnetic information storage using magnetic vortices, and this research can lead to an understanding of how bits of information can be written onto arrays of magnetic nanocylinders.

Recently two journals accepted Professor Gray Lundy's poems for publication.

"my father," "five," "once left," "twenty," "in start," have been accepted for publication in the literary journal *Parting Gifts*. "death occupies so completely," has been accepted for publication in the literary journal *Poetry Flash*.

On February 22nd, Dr. Rob Thomas was an invited speaker in the geosciences colloquium at The University of Montana-Missoula, where he received the "Distinguished Geosciences Alumnus Award" from the Department of Geosciences at the university. He was recently published in a book entitled "Field Geology Education: Historical Perspectives and Modern Approaches," which is published by the Geological Society of America. This book featured two articles by Dr. Thomas, including one co-authored with Dr. Sheila Roberts on the use of Experience One to teach the geosciences in the field at Montana Western, and the other with colleagues at the Princeton University Geology Field Camp entitled: The Yellowstone-Bighorn Research Association (YBRA): Maintaining a leadership role in field-course education for 79 years. In the next few weeks, Dr. Thomas will be speaking on research with his students at the Arctic Grayling Recovery Program annual meeting in Bozeman and Humboldt State University in Arcata, California. He will be the keynote speaker for the annual meeting of the Montana Academy of Sciences

and has been asked to give the commencement address at the graduation ceremony for the College of Earth and Space Sciences at the University of Washington in Seattle, WA in June.

Following is a brief summary of the PSP (Public Service Project) that Health and Human Performance Instructor Cheryl Juergen's fall 2009 HHP 241 Personal and Community Health class performed with the Tobacco Task Force. The PSP is the common assignment for the class and students are required to put in 10 hours of time on a public project. The PSP was a tremendous teaching and learning experience for the entire class and seemed to capture a component of the Experiential model. The students designed the entire project that resulted in the 4-day campus wide educational campaign. Over 400 individuals completed a survey developed by the students with the assistance of the Tobacco Free Task Force. Results of the survey will be used to assist the campus in planning for future events and educational opportunities. Several students indicated that they would be attempting to modify their own tobacco use practices as a result of their work on the PSP.

On January 22<sup>nd</sup> Professor Judy Ulrich attended the presentation of the 2010 Governor's Arts Awards to six individuals with important contributions to the Arts in Montana and beyond. A link to more information is: [http://art.mt.gov/about/about\\_govawards.asp](http://art.mt.gov/about/about_govawards.asp) Dr. Ulrich is on the Executive Committee of the Montana Arts Council and was also on the committee that made recommendations on the awards to the governor.

Dr. Alan Weltzien was recently appointed by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to a three-year term on the BLM's (Bureau of Land Management's) western Montana RAC (Resource Advisory Council). The RAC includes fifteen members representing a range of interests in public land use and policy. The RACs meet quarterly. Dr. Jack Kirkley is already a member of this RAC.

Last fall Dr. Weltzien was selected to participate in the NEH-funded *Big Read* program for AY 2009-10. In Montana it is administered through the MHS (Montana Historical Society). This year's featured writer is Edgar Allen Poe, because of his bicentennial. Professor Weltzien was the Poe scholar who gave a couple of talks in Helena in November, to the involved schoolteachers representing half a dozen districts around the state. Currently he is making appearances at their high schools and communities, leading discussions in classes, giving a power-point presentation on Poe, and also addressing community groups in the evening.

Dr. Julie Bullard, Director of Early Childhood Education, presented several workshops this fall including presenting "Early childhood education curriculum" at the Family and Consumer Sciences State Conference. She presented a workshop "Developing outdoor learning centers" at the Montana State Early Childhood Conference and Regional Head Start Conference. Professor Bullard was also an invited presenter at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Conference in Washington DC where she co-presented a full day session on NAEYC/NCATE Accreditation and at the Opening Minds Conference in Chicago where she co-presented a full day session on "Classroom set up to reduce challenging behavior." She also presented on quality early childhood indoor and outdoor environments to early childhood programs and college classes in Billings, Bozeman, and Helena.

#### **NWCCU Visit**

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) will conduct a comprehensive visit of The University of Montana Western on April 21-23, 2010. This is a regular 10-year visit that will bring about 10 evaluators as well as possibly a liaison from NWCCU to campus for a thorough review of how well we are accomplishing our mission and goals as well as meeting the standards and policies of NWCCU. This is an excellent opportunity for us to receive an outside peer review of what we are doing well and what areas we need to improve. One of the areas we will highlight in our self-study will be the very successful conversion to Experience One scheduling and the resultant increased opportunities for experiential learning. We have a lot to be proud of with this innovation as well as other improvements to the academic program, student and other campus services, and the physical plant.

In preparation for this visit, a number of people have been working with Assistant Provost Brian Price to prepare a thorough self-study as well as documentation and exhibits. Dr. Price expects to have an entire first draft ready for review and posted on-line soon.

#### **Note:**

*This newsletter will be posted on the Provost's website at <http://www.umwestern.edu/administration/vcaa/newsletters/> Back issues can also be found at the same site. It will also be mailed to Dillon community members who express an interest in receiving it. The purpose is to have a central, broadly distributed information resource to keep people informed about Western, its programs, and its faculty, staff, and students. If you have information that you believe would be appropriate for this newsletter please send it to Karl Ulrich in the Provost's office, [k\\_Ulrich@umwestern.edu](mailto:k_Ulrich@umwestern.edu)*