

NOTES FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

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This past academic year, once again, featured a change in G&G's faculty, where Dr. Katherine Ryker left at the end of the fall semester for a new appointment at the University of South Carolina, in Columbia. Nevertheless, as you might expect from knowing Katherine, she continues to interact with colleagues and students at EMU while embarking on her new academic assignment.

G&G faculty members received a number of awards and recognition during the past academic year including:

- 1) Professor Dan Bonenberger - who was awarded a two semester sabbatical beginning in September 2017 - was also funded for a West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (WVSHPO) grant. During the project Dan will be using GIS to overlay maps from the 1850s-90s with the latest high resolution ortho-photographs to help identify the oldest surviving dwellings in one of Wheeling, West Virginia's oldest neighborhoods. Archival research will reveal the history and significance of these early homes and the story of their owners and occupants. Dan will place them in historical and geographical contexts and make recommendations for subsequent efforts.
- 2) Christine Clark and Katherine Ryker were awarded the Project "Cultivating Feelings of Success in STEM at Eastern Michigan University" that was funded through the Bridging Our Divides program. The goal of this project was to assess how students in STEM programs define success, what makes them feel successful, and what keeps them from being successful in their programs. This was a collaborative effort with colleagues from Math (Gabriela Dumitrascu), eLearning (Matt King), the Holman Success Center (Amelia Parnis) and Academic Support Programs (Christine Deacons). It was done with representatives from the Provost's Retention Committee (Christine Clark, Christine Deacons) and the Gateways to Completion Program (Christine Deacons).
- 3) Matt Cook received an Academic Service Learning Award for Winter 2018 – one course release – and he was selected to participate in ORDA's CoRE grant writing program that included a winter 2018 and a fall 2018 course release.
- 4) Brian Connolly and Chris Gellasch received an award for the eFellows proposal "Integrating Remote Environmental Sensing into Active Science Learning," where the award of \$5,970.50 included a departmental match.
- 5) Ted Ligibel was selected to receive a Michigan Historic Preservation Network **2018 Lifetime Achievement Award**. It is presented to outstanding and deserving individuals, who through personal effort and/or involvement in historic preservation have made a significant contribution to the preservation of Michigan's heritage (see page 3).
- 6) John Oswald received notice of a Brickley Award of \$933 in support of his research project "Invisible Divisions: Analyzing Urban separations in Ann Arbor, Michigan," and a Summer Research/Creative Activity Award for Summer 2018 - which consisted of a \$12,000 stipend in lieu of a teaching assignment.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NOTES	1
DR. TED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT	3
WWII UNIFORM BY NANCY BRYK	4
STRONG RENOVATIONS	6
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT	8

Notes From The Department Head Cont.

- 7) Eric Portenga - Summer Research/Creative Activity Award for Summer 2018 - which consists of a \$12,000 stipend in lieu of a teaching assignment.
- 8) Xining Yang— received a Brickley Awarded project "Human-Geospatial Data Interaction: Leveraging Virtual Reality to Extend Teaching and Learning in GIST".

We also should recognize examples of G&G student success over the course of FY2017/18 as follows:

- 1) Donovan Verge Undergraduate Symposium, Senior Thesis completed July, 2017.
- 2) Tianyang Chen (2nd Place) and Yuchen Li (3rd Place) for the Master's Student Research Award Presentation each received at the East Lakes Division Meeting of the American Association of Geographers - where the 2nd place award is \$75 and the 3rd place award is \$50. Over 100 students from four states and 25 Geography programs participated in the student research paper and poster presentations.
- 3) Harel Tanjong and Bill Welsh received a UG Stimulus award for the winter 2018 semester.
- 4) Jacob Kowalczyk and Chris Gellasch received a UG Stimulus award for the winter 2018 semester.
- 5) Ryan Sean and Madeline Ligotti working with faculty mentor Matt Cook received an Undergraduate Research Stimulus (URS) award.
- 6) Richard Merz faculty mentor Christina Clark received an Undergraduate Research Stimulus (URS) award for summer 2018.
- 7) G&G faculty members also are regularly cited by local media, where for example: Tom Kovacs article by Geoff Larcom in the [EASTERN Magazine for Spring 2018 titled "Predicting Weather Patterns - Q&A with Professor Tom Kovacs."](#) Tom also received a publishing agreement with Kendall-Hunt for a new textbook titled "Introduction to Forecasting."

In October of 2017 the department hosted the annual conference of the East Lakes Region of the American Association of Geographers (AAG), where a Thursday evening reception was held at the Freight House in Depot Town and the conference itself took place in the Student Center. Dr. Bill Welsh provided musical entertainment along with fellow band members, including Dr. Dan Brown from UM in Ann Arbor. Over 100 faculty and student members from all of the surrounding Great Lake states attended the conference – where two of our GIS graduate students received award recognition for their research presentations, as noted above. All in all the conference was a great success providing an opportunity to showcase the department and talk about the ongoing of the Strong building renovation.

G&G faculty members spent the entire academic year housed in separate locations – where most were located in offices on the 4th floor of the old King dormitory building while a few of the ESSC faculty members remained in their offices in the Mark Jefferson Science Complex. Dr. Ligibel and the GAs for the Historic Preservation program were housed in King 311, along with my office and that of our department secretary Linda Cannady. A major accomplishment realized during the year was the construction on the lower floor of the Mark Jefferson building of a laboratory facility for the rock and mineral collection used by ESSC faculty members in class and in research. During an open house held to commemorate the event, President Smith visited and was very impressed with the collection as well as the research conducted by ESSC faculty members. This new ESSC research facility has contributed to the excitement that is building as the \$40 million renovation of the Strong building progresses on schedule– which will complete the construction phase of the entire Science Complex at EMU. During the winter semester, faculty members and friends of G&G alike were given their first tour of the building to see for themselves the transformative renovation process (see page 6). There was great excitement among those who participated in the tour viewing their future classroom and office spaces. Finally, we have been told we will start to move laboratory materials into the new Strong building during fall 2018 – and classes are scheduled to take place in winter 2019. We plan to take many pictures this fall semester as we lay claim to our new academic home.

Department News

Dr. Ted J Ligibel receives 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award

****Original photo and article written by Alyssa Schad in EMU Today, March 09, 2018.**



The Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) has selected Ted Ligibel as a winner of the 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award for his efforts and contributions to preserving Michigan's heritage.

Founded in 1981, [MHPN](#) is a non-profit organization that protects historic buildings, structures, sites and places. Winners of the Lifetime Achievement Award are selected by MHPN's senior leadership.

MHPN will officially present Ligibel with the award on May 18 at the Annual Preservation Awards Ceremony and Reception.

"Being recognized by your peers for such an award is the sweetest of honors, so the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Michigan Historic Preservation Network is especially meaningful for me," said Ligibel. "To be recognized for having had an impact on our students and on the historic preservation profession is all that one could ask."

Ligibel has worked in historic preservation for 44 years and frequently lectures and writes about historic preservation, local history and historic architecture. The textbook "Historic Preservation: An Introduction to its History, Principles and Practice," co-authored by Ligibel and Norman and Ilene Tyler, is the nation's best-selling preservation textbook.

Ligibel worked with two U.S. presidential administrations on historic preservation issues and served for eight years on the Michigan State Historic Preservation Review Board as a member or chair.

Additionally, he helped secure National Park designation for two historic sites: the River Raisin National Battlefield in Monroe, Michigan and the Fallen Timbers Battlefield in Maumee, Ohio.

Ligibel has spent 27 years at EMU as a professor and has served as the director of the Historic Preservation program for 19 years.

"Knowing that so many of our graduates, hundreds for sure, have used their degrees to positively advance the historic preservation profession in Michigan, the nation, and even around the world is perhaps the most gratifying of rewards," said Ligibel.

Jan Kamienski's Concentration Camp Uniform

Nancy Villa Bryk, Associate Professor, Historic Preservation

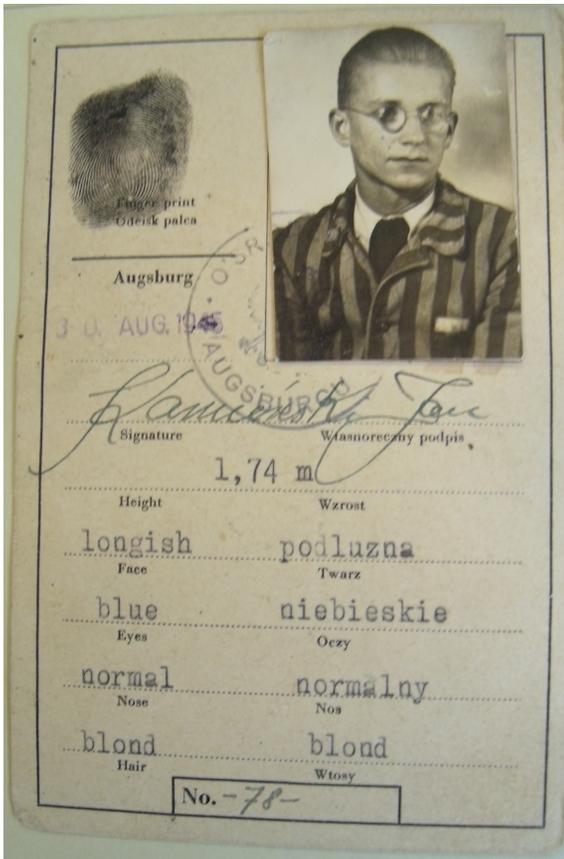


Photo by the author, in the Collections of The Henry Ford

In 1998, when I was a curator at The Henry Ford, I was forwarded a short email that had come into the general information message box. The one-line email asked if the Museum would be interested in acquiring a World War II era concentration camp uniform. The sender was asking on behalf of an elderly family friend, and left this person's phone number. I jumped up and called the number immediately as I could hardly believe my eyes. I talked to the widow of the owner of this uniform, Jan Kamienski, who she said had been a Polish Catholic survivor of Dachau. Jan Kamienski emigrated to the United States—Hamtramck—in 1951 and brought little with him. However, he insisted on bringing the uniform and all the documents he had from the camps. Jan Kamienski had passed away in 1976 and his widow was finally moving from their home. She just wanted these items out of their front hall closet where they had sat for decades. This was a donation—she had no interest in making money from them.

Of course, my first thought was that this was some kind of fake as movies reproduced many of these and sold them. How many of these uniforms could there be? I arranged to visit her immediately. Kamienski's widow told me a few things such as his Dachau internment and that he was moved around the camps because the Germans discovered he was a gifted linguist and was able to translate between factions. I was astonished by what she was willing to donate. The uniform did not seem to be a fake (I was a clothing curator and this was my area of expertise). I also contacted the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and they concurred that while these were rare they had a sizable collection of these uniforms. They also told me some things to look for in the uniform (which were visible) but the assessment was really up to me.

I was convinced this was a genuine artifact. And while the uniform is a gem, the documents that accompany the uniform are even more astonishing. Kamienski brought nearly fifty documents with him that unequivocally verified the history his widow briefly related, and far more. They revealed that at age eighteen he had been captured in Posnan in April, 1940 for unclear reasons, thrown into Dachau, then Mathausen, and finally was sent to Augsburg. He endured five full years in the camps. The papers included a photo of Kamienski standing in the rubble of Augsburg camp with two inmates and an American G.I. He kept papers from various post-war agencies which included photo I.D. of Kamienski in the uniform the Museum acquired (he likely had no other clothing). There were other U.S. documents such as Kamienski's citizenship papers, photos of his Hamtramck home with his widow, a few documents from an employer, and a newspaper clipping from the Hamtramck paper announcing his arrival in the U.S. under the headline (in Polish) "Free at Last." Perhaps the most remarkable item of the fifty we acquired was a birthday card created from a file folder composed of a colored

Jan Kamienski's Concentration Camp Uniform

Nancy Villa Bryk, Associate Professor, Historic Preservation

pencil drawing of the Augsburg camp—including a depiction of Kamienski on the front—and a Czech birthday greeting hand written within.

With Mrs. Kamienski's permission and through a signed receipt, I took the uniform to the Museum and our Collections Committee approved its acquisition, convinced of its authenticity and confident this uniform could reveal a compelling story. The collection went into storage, and I moved on to other duties and responsibilities, ultimately leading my curatorial unit.

I left the Museum in 2006 and left the uniform behind, regretting I had not researched it further. I did not think much more about it until 2016, when a museum colleague visited Henry Ford Museum and mentioned to a senior collections person there that he was so pleased that the uniform was in the collections there. This Henry Ford Museum staff member stated, in front of a group of other professionals, that it was a fake. My colleague relayed this information to me immediately. Furious at this pronouncement, and deeply hurt on Kamienski's behalf, I resolved to pick up the research on the uniform again.

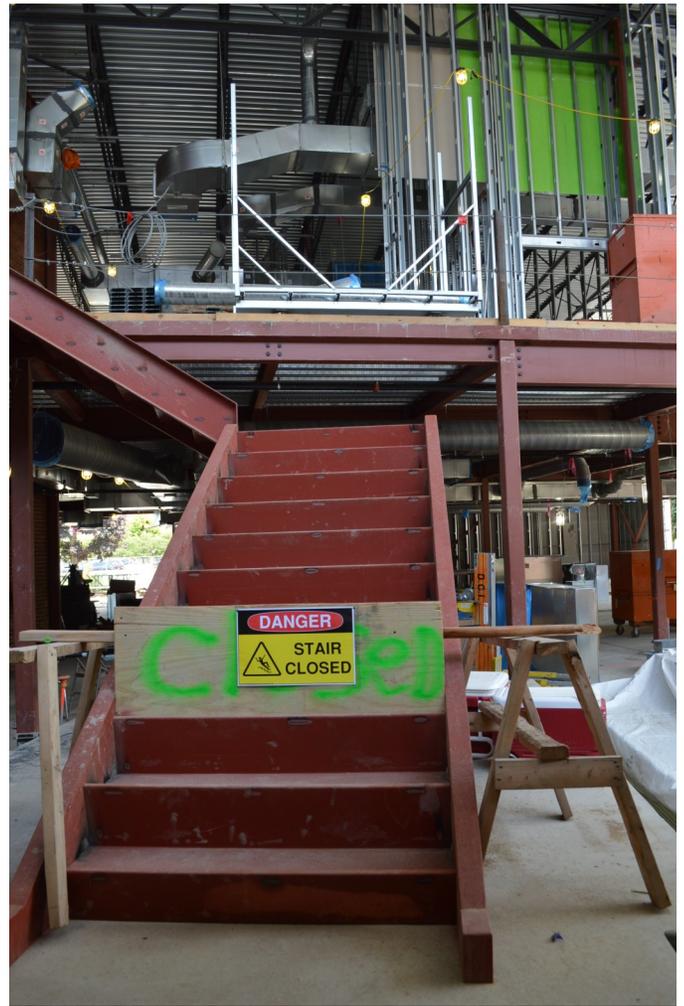
I have spent the last year or so focusing on further research on the uniform. At my expense, I visited the United States Holocaust Museum to compare photos of Kamienski's uniform to other uniforms in their collection; USHMM's collections staff there spent several hours with me, delighted to confirm its authenticity. They are fascinated with its documentation and helped me find more information on Kamienski—in Polish and German—in the Holocaust survivors' databases. I have received a small Provost's Grant which supports translation of foreign documents and additional travel for research. In fact, a few months ago, I found Kamienski's name in a U.S. Army file online at the National Archives in College Park, MD. I have just returned from a trip there where I found a declassified 90-page F.B.I. dossier on Kamienski, who worked as a low-level spy for the Polish Red Cross (presumably spying on the Communist Party). I believe there may be more information on Kamienski's movements in other FBI files at the National Archives. I am also seeking more information on Kamienski in Hamtramck and Detroit. Surprisingly, there is more information on Kamienski from his time in the concentration camps than from his life in Detroit. Ordinary Americans—working class people—barely leave a footprint.

My research on the artifact, Kamienski's life and story, will continue. I am grateful to funding and am buoyed by what my recent research has revealed. I am confident there is much more to ferret out. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum believes this may be the best documented Polish Catholic survivor's uniform in the U.S.—and perhaps anywhere. I hope I may develop a compelling story of a Detroit-area immigrant and his life as a Polish Catholic in the camps.

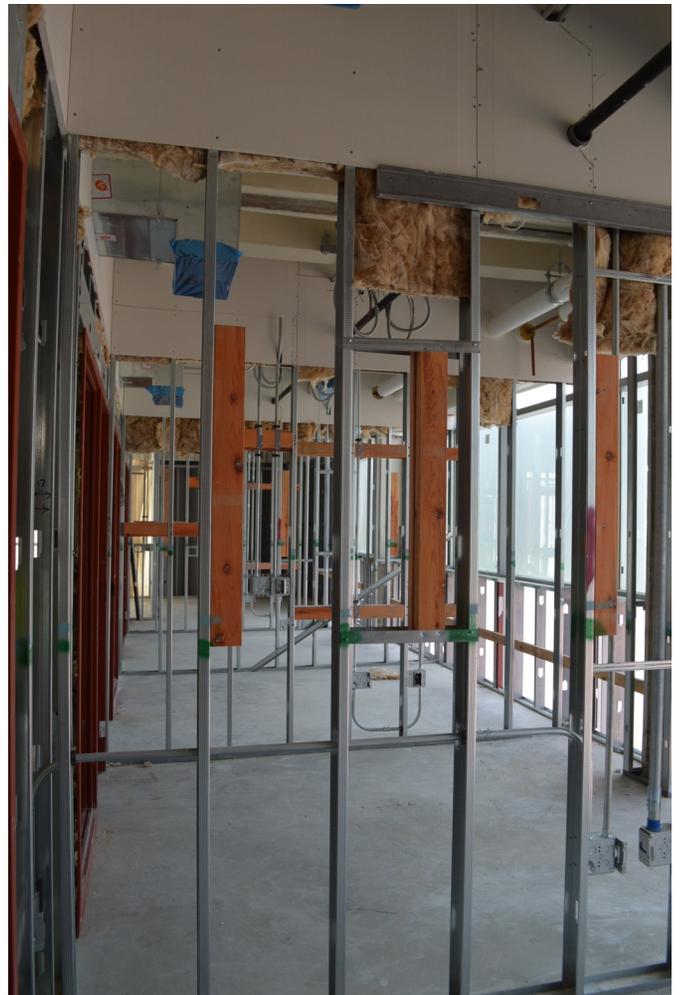


Courtesy The Henry Ford

Strong Hall Renovation Progress 7/25/18



Strong Hall Renovation Progress 7/25/18



Spotlight: Students & Alumni

Afton Welninski, IESS-Environmental Biology Alum

Afton is an alumni of The Department of Geography and Geology's newest program: Interdisciplinary Environmental Science and Society (IESS), with a concentration in Biology and a minor in Social Work. She graduated in December 2016.



Afton chose environmental biology due to her love and curiosity for the natural world, fresh water sciences, resource management, and being able to have academic exposure to the disciplines of geology, meteorology and social sciences. A born and raised Michigander who spent a majority of her summers on local inland lakes in Jackson County, it is one of her life long goals and passions to research, advocate and educate others on the importance and fragility of these precious fresh water resources.

Currently, Afton is employed as a research contractor with the United States Geological Survey (USGS): Great Lakes Science Center in Ann Arbor, MI. The current research she takes part in is formally titled: The Functional Assessment of Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands. In simpler terms, it is an ecological study assessing whether wetland quality (based on biotic and abiotic conditions) impacts juvenile fish diets, species presence and the overall macroinvertebrate and zooplankton communities in these systems. To understand the importance of wetlands, think of them as the kidneys of our aquatic worlds, how healthy is the human body without properly functioning kidneys? Thanks to EMU's small class sizes, interaction with professors and a focus on practical, fundamental research skills including but not limited to: taxonomic keying, detailed field journaling, in field sampling techniques and emphasis on science writing, Afton felt equipped for her first job experience post undergrad.

When she's off the clock at the USGS Afton can be found waiting tables part-time to help fund her post-college travels to places such as China, The Canadian Maritimes, Isle Royale, and all her other favorite Michigan camping spots. A hunger for travel doesn't make Afton any less of a homebody and she can often be found reading fiction, cooking, educating herself on extreme weather events, binging on animated series, riding her bike around Ypsilanti, day dreaming about owning a dog, and spending time with her friends and college sweetheart of seven years.



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Earth Science Education GR
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(Undergrad & Grad)
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Geotourism
GIS (GR)
GIST

The Department of Geography and Geology has a long tradition and an exciting future. We have seven programs to service those interested in the Geo-based arts and sciences. Along with our undergraduate programs in Earth Science, Geography, Geology, and Urban and Regional Planning, we have secondary teacher certifications in Earth Science and Geography, minors in Geotourism, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Historic Preservation, and master's programs in Earth Science Teaching, GIS, Historic Preservation, and Urban and Regional Planning.

G&G on the Web!

Interested in learning more about our department? Visit us on the web!

If you are looking for general information, such as faculty, program curriculums, or calendar of events, please see our newly renovated official page at: <http://www.emich.edu/geo>

Are you a social-networking enthusiast? So are we! The Department of Geography & Geology has both fan and group pages on Facebook! So go "Like" a page or join a group today!

Geography Honor Society (Gamma Theta Upsilon) was reactivated in 2016 - see your Geography adviser for further information!

Fan pages

[EMU Geography & Geology](#)

Group pages

(Please search  for us!)

- Eastern Michigan University Department of Geography & Geology Group
- Preservation Eastern
- Eastern Michigan University Historic Preservation Alumni
- GIS Club
- Travel & Tourism Club
- Eastern Michigan University Geotourism Program
- GeoClub at EMU
- P.L.A.C.E

