

SPECIAL POINTS
OF INTEREST:

- Student
Achievements &
Recognitions
- Faculty
Achievements
- Academic
Program Review
- Departmental
Guests
- NEW GIFT
CATALOG!

Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences

QUALITY EXPERIENCES, LIVES, AND COMMUNITIES

Join Our Team of Educators!

The quality of RPTS students' education is a result of many types of contributions. Members of our educational team include not only faculty and staff but also donors, advisory committee members, guest speakers, industry leaders, intern supervisors, employers, community partners, and others. We have added a gift catalog to our newsletter so that you may support RPTS!

A list of select department programs and initiatives to which you may contribute is listed on page 10.

Your contributions will benefit

present and future Aggies! Donors, welcome to our educational team!

Please contact Gary Ellis (gellis@ag.tamu.edu ; 979-845-6018) if you want to know more about a particular program. Gary is Department Head and will be happy to speak with you about gifts or any other matter that is of interest to you.



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Faculty, Staff & Graduate Student Accomplishments

Published in the current issue (Vol. 30, Number 4, Winter, 2012) of
Journal of Park and Recreation Administration:

Dr. Lavell Merritt



Dr. Scott Shafer



Dr. Lavell Merritt and Dr. Scott Shafer

**The Use Preservation Paradox:
An Examination of Negotiated Rulemaking
at Cape Hatteras National Seashore**

Dr. John Crompton

**Estimates of the Economic Benefits
Accruing From an Expansion of
Houston's Bayou Greenway Network**

Dr. John Crompton



*Dr. Matarrita recently received funding for the two
projects below.*

Dr. Schuett is coauthor on the second project.

Dr. Michael Schuett

Dr. David Matarrita

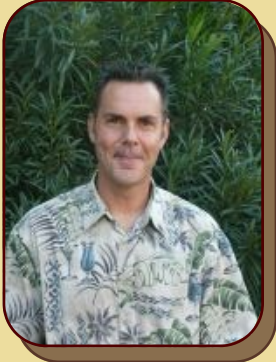


**Identifying Social Network and Mobile Technology
Use and Its Correlation with Individual Evacuation
Behavior in Hurricane Sandy.** National Science
Foundation. With J. Yates, E. Moreno-Centeno and
Thomas Ferris, Industrial and Systems Engineering,
Texas A&M University.

**Examining the Relationship Between National Parks and Adjacent Communi-
ties: Understanding Stakeholder's Perspectives.** Division of Research, Office of the Vice
President of Research, Texas A&M University. With M. Schuett, Recreation, Park, and
Tourism Sciences, Texas A&M University.

Faculty, Staff & Graduate Student Accomplishments

Dr. Jim Petrick



Dr. Petrick is quoted in the NBC news piece on safety and the cruise industry.

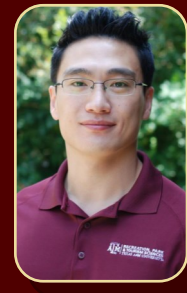
<http://www.nbcnews.com/travel/high-seas-safety-spotlight-year-after-deadly-costa-concordia-crash-1B7937378>

It is an interesting article following the Costa-Concordia tragedy. Dr. Petrick's contribution includes his thoughts on how the incident will impact demand.

Estimates of the Economic KangJae “Jerry” Lee (right) has been selected to receive the 2013 U.S. Senator Phil Gramm Doctoral Fellowship. J

Jerry Lee and Professor David Scott publish their article titled, “Interracial contact experience during recreational basketball and soccer: Korean American Males’ perspectives,” in the current issue (vol 45, number 3, 2013) of Journal of Leisure Research.

KangJae “Jerry” Lee



Dr. Ron Kaiser



Dr. Kaiser (left), contributed expert analysis to a National Public Radio piece on water issues in the West.

New Faculty Spotlight



Chris Harrist

Chris Harrist, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, will be joining the RPTS faculty in the fall of 2013. Dr. Harrist joins the department after having been a professor at the University of New Hampshire. Dr. Harrist's research interest lies in understanding the contextual and programmatic components that lead to positive developmental opportunities and outcomes for youth. Dr. Harrist is serving as Coordinator of our Youth Development Initiative.



Brandy Kelly

Brandy Kelly, Assistant Professor, will be joining the RPTS faculty for the fall semester of 2013. She earned a PhD RPTS at TAMU May 2013. Dr. Kelly's foci includes race/ethnicity & leisure activity/narratives, youth development & youth cultural studies with a specific focus on gender & community based approaches, qualitative approaches (particularly performance and narrative analysis) community based participatory research & youth participatory action research designs, interdisciplinary perspectives of hope, eco-feminist and womanist theory.



Debe Shafer

Debe Shafer, Lecturer, will be joining the RPTS family starting in the Fall 2013 semester. She earned her Masters at the University of Utah in Health Education where she studied Health, Exercise Physiology, and Recreation. Debe has twenty years of teaching experience at the college and high school level. Debe is currently serving on the City of College Station parks Board and the College Station ISD Health Advisor Board.



Jinmoo Heo

Jinmoo Heo, Assistant Professor, will be joining the RPTS faculty in the fall of 2013. Dr. Heo joins the department after having been a professor at the Indiana University System. Dr. Heo is interested in exploring quality of life issues for older adults. Dr. Heo will also be working with the Event Management Program.

Gary's Gab



Dr. Gary Ellis
Department Head

Well, it has been a very exciting Spring semester, and Gary has quite a bit to “gab” about! Among the many success stories from which to choose, I offer a few comments on a) our academic program review, b) our distinguished visitors, c) our high-impact learning programs, and d) a significant gift from a generous donor.

One of our major projects this semester was the Academic Program Review. Academic Program Reviews are part Texas A&M University’s commitment to continuous quality improvement. All academic programs are reviewed on a 7-year cycle. Reviews engage faculty in conducting in-depth analyses of their programs and resources and compiling those reviews into a self-study report. The self-study report becomes the basis for a rigorous evaluation by a “site visit” team of top authorities from peer institutions.

Our Department was very fortunate to have a particularly talented and accomplished team of reviewers. The team was chaired by Dr. Karla Henderson, of North Carolina State University, and team members included Distinguished Professors Linda Caldwell (The Pennsylvania State University) and Lowell Caneday (Oklahoma State University). The team reported that they “...were highly impressed by faculty, staff and students.” They found students to be fully “...engaged in their academic work and valued the educational opportunities” they were receiving. Staff services were described as “particularly impressive.” Reviewers noted that our staff members were not only deeply committed to excellence in their work, but also to “enhancing the Department’s mission and the opportunities offered.” The team reported that “...faculty members are highly respected researchers in our field and are exceedingly productive...they demonstrate their commitment to teaching undergraduate students as well as the mentoring of graduate students...Although budget cuts have occurred, the Department has been successful in covering the instructional needs and maintaining the academic experiences for all students at a high level.” Recommendations for continuous quality improvement include a) continuing to focus on the strengths of the program to ensure that those continue, b) continue to build on the successes of the many collaborative programs, c) continue to commit to current, cutting-edge curricula, d) monitor the extent to which we are over-extended, given the budget reductions Texas A&M has endured during the last two years, and e) continued vigilance in assuring quality as demand for distance education programs continues to grow.

During the fall semester, under the leadership of Tourism Management Advisory Committee member and part-time faculty Mr. Paul Serff, we launched the “Legends in the Texas Travel Industry Speaker Series.” Mr. Serff arranged visits by two “Legends” during the fall semester: Mr. Dan Decker, President of Sea World and Mrs. Terri Adams, Chief Operating Officer of Schlitterbahn. During the spring semester, we were also deeply honored to host a visit from former Director of the National Park Service, Mary Bomar. All of these distinguished visitors focused their energies on helping our students succeed. They engaged classes with stories about the challenges and rewards of managing organizations in the experience industries, they met with students in small groups, and they even provided individual consultations in a few cases. Our visitors also con-

Gary's Gab Continued

sulted with faculty on matters of curriculum, research needs, and trends in the experience industries. The value of these experiences to students and to faculty is beyond measure.

The Department also continued its leadership and innovation in high-impact learning. Students in youth development classes and community development classes developed first-hand knowledge through direct experiences with professionals and service recipients in our community. A special class traveled to the Great Smokey Mountains to participate in a unique consortium involving leading park managers. During the upcoming Maymester, students who are aspiring park managers will travel to Southern Utah to study park operations and management under the tutelage of the former superintendent of Arches National Park and former Director of Texas State Parks, Mr. Walt Dabney. Texas Travel Industry Association President Emeritus Mr. Paul Serff will take another group of students behind the scenes at several of Texas' top attractions in San Antonio and Houston. A class on hotel operations and guest experience design in the cruise industry will be taught during a cruise to Bermuda. Faculty and students continue to be very excited about these high impact learning programs that are made possible through commitments of our faculty and industry leaders.

On April 2, we were extremely excited to learn that Mr. Robert Starnes '72 and his wife Robin, are providing a new scholarship in support of undergraduate students interested in tourism management. The program funded by Mr. and Mrs. Starnes will support between 2 and 5 students per year. The program is being created in honor of Sue Wittens '72 who was a student colleague of Mr. Starnes. Ms. Wittens was tragically killed in an automobile accident shortly after graduation, while driving to her first job in parks and recreation. We are very pleased that Mr. and Mrs. Starnes have chosen to support Aggie students and honor Ms. Wittens through this scholarship.

Indeed, I have had a lot to gab about! I look forward to the end of another very exciting and very successful academic year, and I wish the greatest of success to the graduating class of '13! Very best wishes to all.

Gary Ellis



AgriLife Extension

Port Aransas Tourism Visitor Study

Relevance: The Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce is the organization responsible for marketing tourism in Port Aransas. Tourism is extremely important to the Port Aransas economy and communicating the significance of tourism and visitor feedback is important for the Chamber of Commerce. Miles Phillips has worked with Port Aransas for the past 11 years and when they decided they wanted to do a formal visitor study they asked for assistance.

Response: Miles collaborated with Dr. Kyle Woosnam of RPTS and submitted a proposal which was funded. A survey instrument and methodology was developed and a survey team conducted the first of a planned five in-person survey visits to Port Aransas in October.

Impact Results: The first survey trip was a success and resulted in over 100 completed visitor surveys. The second survey trip in February resulted in over 200 newly completed surveys. The project is scheduled for completion in September of 2013.

Extension Specialist Stephen Brueggerhoff continues to promote the mission of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service through Texas Friendly Instructor Training workshops in February 2013. Stephen trained professional tourism managers as instructors in Weatherford and Kilgore, Texas, continuing to enlist community leaders as Extension volunteers that will have a positive impact within their community.

Results: Results: A summative evaluation from workshop registrants indicated that 100% will adopt information learned from the training, and the majority (93%) agreed that customer service training will provide confidence to change their level of commitment in creating positive customer service experiences. There is a documented outcome of increase in knowledge from both populations (100%). Of note is all anticipate an economic benefit as a direct result from the training.

Port Aransas
Texas. Island style.
& MUSTANG ISLAND

www.PORTARANSAS.ORG | 361-749-5919

“Creating
positive
customer
service
experiences”

Wetland Restoration Team

Relevance: The Wetland Restoration program coordinated by Marissa Sipocz plays a fundamental role in restoring critical wetland habitat as well as, educating the public about those same wetlands, their importance and the need for restoration. The loss of our wetland habitats, particularly freshwater wetlands, has had a significant and dramatic effect on our native flora and fauna (e.g. a marked drop in migratory and resident waterfowl populations, significant water quality problems in our bays and bayous). The Team, whether directly through restoration or indirectly land management or

education, ultimately contributes to the reversal of this loss particularly through their continued effort to restore wetland habitat at Sheldon Lake State Park.

Response: The Wetland Team hosted 11 Team workdays this quarter which focused on the planting of the wetland basins, preparation of additional propagation material, collection of new plant material and seed. In addition, the Team hosted three workdays with local students: YES prep Brays Oaks students (40 students on 12/1/12; YES Prep North Central, 36 students on 2/6/13; Atascosita High School, 21 students on

2/13/2013). Students conducted an array of restoration activities including seed preparation, seed ball assembly and restoration planting.

Results: 9,619 native wetland plants, comprised of 7 different species, were installed this quarter as part of the Sheldon Lake State Park wetland restoration project. This represents 140% of our goal for plants installed in this project.



Park Operations

Relevance: The Fort Worth Extension County Office works with the City of Fort Worth and the City of Arlington PARs to provide continuing education and employee development for both front line and middle management employees in the area of operations. One of the planning committee's requests was providing both a classroom and on-site session on understanding maintenance modes from a user, experience, and operations perspective.

Response: Dr. Jamie Rae Walker designed sessions based on the general National

Recreation and Park Association standards for maintenance modes and research from the field of environmental psychology.

Results: 50 participants attended the sessions in Arlington and 86 attended the sessions in Fort Worth. 77% anticipated they would benefit economically; and 93% would recommend the activity to others.



Gift Catalog



Instructions to Generous Donors:

If you wish to contribute to the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences please send a check to:

"Texas A&M Foundation"

Please specify how you would like to see your gift used in the "Note" section on the check. Please write it physically on the check.

Mail your gift to:

Gary Ellis
600 John Kimbrough Blvd.
Room 417
2261 TAMU
College Station, Texas 77843-2261

You Can Be An Educator!

Sponsor a “Legend!”

Legends in the Texas Travel Industry Speaker Series.....\$1,000 per “Legend”

The “Legends in the Texas Travel Industry Speaker Series” brings travel industry leaders to the Texas A&M campus. Over a two day period, the speaker makes presentations to classes and interacts with students through meals, receptions, and other events. Students gain unique insight into the joys and challenges of managing major travel and experience industry attractions. Mr. Paul Serff, President-Emeritus of the Texas Travel Industry Association, RPTS Tourism Management Advisory Committee member, and part-time Lecturer created this exciting program for us. Your gift of \$1,000 will establish you as a sponsor of a visit by a “Legend!”



Support

RPTS

Students and

Programs!

Endowed Scholarships!

Support a student's success!\$Gifts in any amount welcome

Generous donors have endowed the following scholarships, and we always welcome additional contributions to those *in any amount!* Contributions to endowments, of course, grow the principal and result in increased awards to students. If you are interesting in creating an endowed scholarship, \$25,000 is required to establish an endowment.

COADC Jana Wisenbaker Endowed Scholarship

Royce E. Wisenbaker, Jr. Endowed Scholarship

Leslie M. Reid Endowed Scholarship

Lon and Inger Garrison Endowed Scholarship

Joyce Nies and Peter Witt Endowed Scholarship

John L. Crompton Endowed Scholarship

Liz Crompton Endowed Scholarship

COADC Heidemann-Wuest Foundation Endowed Scholarship

Clara Wuest Heidemann Scholarship

Kevin Piskura Memorial Scholarship

Sue Wittens '72 Endowed Scholarship

Elizabeth Lee Moore '00 Endowed Scholarship

Louis Hodges Endowed Scholarship

Marguerite Van Dyke Graduate Endowed Scholarship

Korean RPTS Alumni and Marguerite Van Dyke Endowed Scholarship

Thomas G. Viilo Memorial Endowed Scholarship

TAES Jake Hershey Fellowship in Natural Resources Conservation

Elda K. and Joe Bradberry Endowed Scholarship

Robert Ditton Endowed Scholarship

Peter A. Witt and Joyce I. Nies Graduate Youth Development Endowed Scholarship



Help RPTS Sustain & Grow Excellence!

RPTS Excellence Fund.....\$Gifts in any amount welcome

The RPTS Excellence fund provides support for special unanticipated opportunities for our students that arise during the course of many academic years. Your gift to our excellence fund will grow the endowment and provide us even better opportunity to pursue opportunities and continue to grow quality experiences for our students. Mr. Royce Wisenbaker and his wife Jana Wisenbaker endowed this excellence fund for RPTS, and your contribution can help us continue to grow that endowment.

Sponsor an RPTS Quiz Bowl Student!

Quiz Bowl.....\$1,000 for sponsorship of a team member or a coach

RPTS students compete with top students from other universities in national Quiz Bowl competition each year. Teams are comprised of four students and a coach. Students are quizzed on park, recreation and tourism management, marketing, foundational knowledge, and planning and staging of experiences. You have the opportunity to sponsor one or more members of our team or even our coach (your choice).

Become A Partner In Advancing Our High-Impact Learning Programs!

High-Impact Learning Courses.....\$Gifts in any amount are welcome

The Department offers a variety of “high impact learning” classes that immerse students in park, recreation, and tourism industry experiences. These classes engage students in direct experiences with managers and marketing professionals. Students study in major attractions, state and national parks and forests, in cities and towns, and even aboard cruise ships! Students must bear the cost of special fees for such courses, to cover transportation, lodging, and related expenses. Your support will help us include students who are unable to pay the fees necessary for travel to the attractions, lodging, and related expenses.

Connect RPTS Students with Industry Leaders Though TAMU AgriLife Extension Service!

Extension! Connected Learning for Industry Professionals and Students (E!CLIPS)...\$5,000 to sponsor an RPTS student intern for a semester

E!CLIPS is a Texas A&M/ RPTS AgriLife Extension Program that supports real-world training and action research by connecting professionals in recreation, park and tourism businesses and agencies around the world with students and professional learning programs from RPTS Extension. Opportunities are available in nature tourism, youth development, customer service, event planning, park and trail planning, and public input for park planning programs.



Mission

We enhance individual and social well-being and environmental and economic sustainability by generating and disseminating knowledge about the management and development of recreation, park, community, and tourism resources.

Vision

Our mission is achieved through undergraduate and graduate education, outreach, and research that integrate social science and natural resource management disciplines. We strive to understand and respond to the global and local implications of recreation, parks, tourism, and natural resource dimensions of diverse and changing societies. We endeavor to conduct an effective mix of theoretical and applied research, and liberal and professional education that prepares society-ready graduates and provides responsive service and outreach that meets the needs of our constituents.

Core Values

We believe that our education, scientific research, and outreach programs contribute to the expansion of knowledge and to the enhancement of the quality of life.

We believe that our primary responsibility is to the people of Texas; we believe that our contributions to the State of Texas will be enhanced by scholarly activities at the national and international levels.

We value the contributions that parks, recreation, community development, and tourism can make to the health of communities.

We believe in preparing society-ready graduates, with a solid educational foundation that includes experiential and liberal education, and development of skills for career employment and lifelong learning.

We believe that the process of education is a collaborative learning experience, and students, faculty, practitioners, and professionals from other fields are participants in this process.

We recognize the growing demographic and geographic diversity of Texas and the United States; the value of diversity in thoughts and ideas among the faculty, staff, and students; and the opportunities presented by an international border.

We recognize the value of human diversity and interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching, research, and extension, and affirm the individual strengths that people bring to the Department.

We are committed to the contributions of recreation, parks, community development and tourism make to the sustainability and stewardship of cultural, historical, and natural resources.

We are committed to the concepts of social and environmental justice.

We value scholarship that is validated by peers and external audiences; and we believe that scholarship can be expressed through teaching, research, and extension.



Public Service Loan Forgiveness!!

"Do you have a significant amount of student loans? Are you paying more in monthly student-loan payments than you can truly afford? Is your debt-to-income ratio unsustainable? Do you want earn a graduate degree but have concerns that taking on debt would be an unmanageable burden?"

Public Service Loan Forgiveness may be an option for you! Follow the link below to find out!

http://www.parksandrecreation.org/2013/May/Public-Service-Loan-Forgiveness/?goback=%2Egde_1400127_member_259117972

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**QUALITY EXPERIENCES, LIVES,
AND COMMUNITIES**



Editor's Note

Melyssa-Anne Stricklin

On behalf of the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences and the Newsletter team, I want to thank those who have contributed feedback and content for the RPTS Newsletter. Contributions to the newsletter are due before the 15th of the month before the next scheduled issue.



Email Editor at

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Or call at 979-458-8515

Newsletter Schedule

Fall 2013 Newsletter - December, 2013

Spring 2014 Newsletter- May, 2014