News & Activities

The 2010-2011 academic year witnessed a number of personal and professional milestones for members of the department.

Jeff Bookwalter welcomed his new daughter into the world and has enjoyed fatherhood while successfully balancing child care and his job with his usual grace. He presented a paper at the Western Economic Association meetings recently in San Diego.

Doug Dalenberg was lucky to be teaching Principles of Macroeconomics during a particularly fascinating time. It was incredibly easy to make the course relevant and entertaining. On the other end of the spectrum, Doug enjoyed teaching the very theoretical Intermediate Microeconomics course because he got to keep his calculus sharp and torment students with partial derivatives.

Amanda Dawsey remains our most knowledgeable soccer (oops, I mean football) fan, while continuing her popular teaching and research into the timely topic of credit card debt.

Derek Kellenberg was invited to attend several talks in Europe in May – one at ETH Zurich in Zurich, Switzerland, and the other at the University of Bologna in Bologna, Italy. Derek also served on a panel presentation at Flathead Valley Community College, hosted by Climate Solutions on April 14-15, 2010. He continues to serve as an editorial board member of the International Journal of Sustainable Society. He received a visiting scholar grant from the Provost’s Office to bring Arik Levinson from Georgetown University to campus for a week for our Economics Seminar Series. He also received a series of grants from the Blackfoot Challenge, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks to help fund Joe Ramler’s Master’s thesis on the indirect effects of wolf presence on calf weight gain in Montana.

At the end of spring semester, we bade farewell to Mike Kupilik who completed nearly three and a half decades of service to The University of Montana. He’s looking forward to enjoying more time with his family and friends. He phoned recently to let us know he’s very, very tan.

We are all excited for Helen Naughton who is expecting another child very soon and we were delighted when the department’s hallway was decorated with the wonderful posters she had her econometrics students produce this past semester showing off their projects.

Ranjan Shrestha is happily preparing to take over teaching health economics which fits quite well with much of his research. He will be taking over as director of our graduate program in the Fall, although it has nothing to do with Jeff taking our graduate students for long runs.

Kay Unger did her usual masterful job leading the department and she kept the rest of the faculty happy and productive. She will hand over the reins to Derek Kellenberg this fall so that she can end her time at UM teaching a full load to the benefit of all her students.

Emeriti and Research Associates

Tom Power continues to work on a variety of natural resource economic issues including the proposed Pebble copper mine above Bristol Bay in Alaska, renewed uranium mining and milling in western Colorado, and proposed coal ports on the west coast for the export of Powder River Basin coal.
After digging out from under 90 inches of snow over the winter, Dennis O’Donnell continues to serve on the Council of the Montana Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, which is enjoying great success with over 1000 members. This fall Dennis will teach the third in his series of economics courses for the Molli program on current economic policy. The first was “Reality Bites: the Economics of Now,” 2009, the second “Once Bitten Twice Cautious: Regulation and Recovery after the 2008 Crash,” 2010, and the third will tentatively be titled “Hard-Bitten: Economic Policy Options and the Shrink Government Mantra.” Dennis continues to fight Parkinson’s disease with all the weapons at his disposal.

Research Professor Richard Erb continues to conduct research and give lectures on the origins and evolution of the global financial crisis and its continuing aftershocks. The latter are particularly severe in the euro area countries of Greece, Ireland and Portugal. The US economy has remained on Federal Reserve life support with negative real interest rates and special bond purchases (QE2). The QE2 purchases ended in June 2011, but the Fed’s low interest rate policy is expected to be continued.

The global financial crisis, which originated in the United States, and the Fed’s current easy monetary policy have induced a number of emerging market economies to intensify their calls for a reform of the international monetary system in order to reduce the role of the US dollar. For example, China has called for expanding the role of the IMF Special Drawing Right (SDR). Drawing on his earlier experience as Deputy Managing Director of the IMF and his ongoing research on the SDR, Dr. Erb has pointed out in technical articles that the SDR is a very complex financial derivative and that an expanded role of the SDR would raise a number of major monetary and fiscal policy issues for IMF member governments as well as difficult analytical issues.

Dr. Erb also serves as an Adjunct Instructor in the School of Business Administration where he teaches Multinational Finance, a senior-level course.

John Wicks continues to run his research seminar and keep his students busy with his active research agenda. His passions for research and riding trains has not diminished one bit.

Patrick Nicholson won the annual Fall 2011 Final Exam Hall Bowling Championship. Kahen Reinhardt, one of our multi-talented undergraduate students, won the event last year.

Faculty Profile: John H. Wicks

When did you come to The University of Montana, what brought you here and what was the department like in those days?

In fall of 1964, it was outdoor activities – fishing, duck hunting, and hiking – that led me to take a position at UM. I had yielded to influence from my mentors at the University of Illinois to accept a position at Ohio State University. An Ohio State colleague who had previously taught at UM and who realized my lack of enthusiasm with Columbus, recommended that I seek a position here while realizing that I would get a good portion of my salary in fish. He was correct, and I was the ultimate beneficiary.

During that year, the department here numbered six quite diverse members, while UM had about 6,000 students. Now, with a university enrollment of some 15,000 our department numbers only eight.
I must wonder if fads and political correctness have trumped the merits of a traditional strong liberal arts education.

Those of us constituting the department’s faculty since 1964 have thought inadequate funding to be a major problem. In 1964, we lamented that we could not match the resources and prestige of nearby departments such as the Universities of Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico. It remains common to compare UM to “benchmark” schools, but the identity and quality of these benchmarks seem indeed to have changed.

Our department’s faculty has included a number of indeed colorful members during my tenure. For instance, during 1964-65, Dick Armey was here as visiting instructor. I wonder whether his youth in a place named Cando, North Dakota, conditioned him to run for the US House of Representative and ultimately to serve as majority leader and a molder of the Tea Party movement.

UM’s recent attention to “publish or perish” appears to have resulted in much more work and scholarly productivity by economics faculty members. The undergraduate thesis requirement has yielded more active student involvement in the program; however, the faculty has become more specialized in its research focus. I have mixed feelings about this in a liberal arts undergraduate program.

A huge change for UM students over 45 years has been the portion of the costs they must pay. I have mixed emotions on this too. For instance, has “binge drinking” on weekends in the interest of efficiency been desirable?

**Your research seminar course has a long and successful tradition. Could you describe the course and discuss the history of the course?**

This seminar, often termed empirical research design seminar, has two main complementary goals: (1) learning how economists do research and (2) actively participating in this research. A typical economics course focuses on the present state of economic thinking, i.e., economic theory, but says little about the origin or veracity of the theory. Being aware of the steps in gaining knowledge about economics, i.e., economic research, reveals this origin. (The steps are the question to be answered, current state of knowledge, model being tested, data used to do the testing, analysis of that data, and its conclusions.)

The goal and requirement of active participation by each member enhances learning effectiveness and participant enjoyment. Requiring everyone’s informal oral participation makes everyone’s thoughts available. I discuss the value of these thoughts below. It provides incentive for additional learning that will help the project and increase members’ learning in the process.

The goal and requirement of active member participation has provided the people necessary to carry out these projects. It is a skill that a single faculty member, even one whose duties include being a part of seminar, is unlikely to have. It provides incentives for additional learning that will help the
Faculty Profile: John H. Wicks (continued)

project and increase individual member’s knowledge in the process. Besides, everyone is more likely to remain alert. We have found it desirable for a prospective seminar member to be sponsored by a present or past seminar member.

In the seminar we work as a group, I included, to conduct an original economics research project. In the early years of seminar we found that all working together on the same endeavor at a given time works best. It is really impressive what the combined talents of everyone in a seminar allow us to do. Most of our projects provide the data for one or more refereed publications in a domestic or even international (e.g., the UK) scholarly journal. An advantage we have gained from doing this is that most economists, faculty or students, have little experience in gathering their own research data. Over the decades we have learned a lot about obtaining such data via personal interviews in Missoula. Veteran student members of seminar pass this knowledge to the rookies in following generations of student seminar members. For this reason, it is important that one remain a member of seminar for as many semesters as possible.

With a sample size that may number some 400 or 500, it often requires a year or so to conduct the interviews for one project. As the interviewing for one project gets well underway, seminar “brainstorms” to select its next project. Considerations that influence this group decision include seminar’s inherited knowledge of personal interviews and topics likely to prove timely, interesting, and useful. There is a long-term tradition that the current subject be enjoyable.

Over the years, your research has spanned a wide range of topics. Could you describe the path your research agenda has taken?

A focus of our research evolved several decades ago when we realized in our seminar discussions that with household production – i.e., households doing things for themselves such as child care and meal preparation – the method used for measurement was primitive at best. It quantified the time households spent doing them and then multiplied this time by a wage rate. This so-called labor value method left uncertain the appropriate wage – e.g., do-it-yourselfers are unlikely to be as efficient as professionals – and omitted the value added by the capital used in the household production process. This led us to an output approach that is analogous to the value added approach used in national income accounting. To work, the stages in the production process must be highly disaggregated. The end result was an output approach for valuing household production that has become a measurement standard for household production.

Ultimately, we have applied this output approach to value not only household production but also leisure, the total value of which is similar to both household production and to traditional market output. Estimation of household production functions has logically followed as has components such as person (child, etc.) care. Our projects over the decades have given us ideas for other topics to pursue and the data gathering expertise to pursue them.

Examples range widely and include testing models of criminal behavior by consumers regarding buying or copying of copyrighted materials, the valuation that residents place on the comparative amenities of their locality of residence, the effects of consumer characteristics on the shopping channels they use. Journals in which our papers have been published include Review of Income and Wealth, Journal of Applied Business Research, Urban Studies, Journal of Economics of the Household, and the Social Science Journal. Except for a couple of projects the results of which have not been statistically significant, the results of all of the completed ones have been published in refereed academic journals. Current topics include whether people are satisfaction maximizers in their leisure behavior and the variables that influence people to have high credit card balances.
You have been an Emeritus Professor for quite a few years, yet you still are very regular at work. What is your secret to staying young?

With one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel, I wish that I were staying young. A blood disorder of the past several decades seems to be gaining ground, but I prefer to play economist and assume it away.

Economics is really exciting. That excitement quickly changed me from a political scientist to an economist as an undergraduate. Having the privilege of working with a super, self-perpetuating group in what we term seminar is a great motivator to come to the office daily. A faculty member as one of the group can serve as a resource person, but it is the group’s accumulated knowledge that is augmented and passed along from seminar generation to generation that is a key. Another key is the enthusiastic participation by everyone in seminar. I would like to see that tradition continue.

You also continue to pursue your fascinating hobby of riding trains around the world. Can you give us some background and accomplishments in regards to your hobby?

Train riding is an informal hobby pursued in many forms by enthusiasts throughout the world. A few of us are “mileage collectors.” The object is to ride, one time, as many of the rail lines in one nation or worldwide. The latter is what I became enthusiastically some 25 years ago. Other collectors we term “foamers” because they seem to foam at the mouth when they see or photograph a train. They take lots of pictures.

It is a cooperative rather than competitive undertaking. The mores of the hobby dictate that we go out of our way to aid other collectors in “getting” new miles. A given line “counts” only once, at least for most collectors, and each makes his/her own rules. Many of my friends throughout the US and world are fellow collectors. My, what an interesting and diverse group! While travelling regularly scheduled trains in the US or abroad is quite straightforward, learning of other trips or “rare” miles is a key way to augment one’s collection. An e-mail listing facilitates this.

When one is travelling alone on a regularly scheduled train abroad, the identity of one’s compartment mates can turn out to be fascinating. The Hungarian and English of my elderly compartment mates on a train going from Lake Balaton, Hungary’s resort area, to Budapest, did not match my English, but we got along well. It was only that evening when looking at the coat of arms on Hungarian money and his business card that I realized that they had been the Crown Prince and Princess. I had removed their luggage from the train and it was the Crown Princess who had bowed to me.

The more miles in one’s collection, the more difficult it is to ride “new” miles. The 355,000 miles of my late friend, Stanley Barriger, was the most that any of us knew at the time of his death. Stanley’s father had been the very well respected president of a number of US railroads, and he used his MIT engineering degree as the basis of his railroad consulting career worldwide. My 266,000 miles are as many as anyone still alive of whom I know. Clark Johnson, a physicist by trade, organizes most US rare miles trips using his and his spouse’s car along with others. The railroad cars for these trips, that often include sleeping, dining, and lounge facilities, may get to and from the excursion site on the rear of a regular Amtrak train and operate as a special train elsewhere. This way I still enjoy the hobby.

We enjoy hearing from you. Send us a note any time to give us your news. If you send us an email address (econ@mso.umt.edu) we’ll notify you when the next newsletter is posted to the website.
GRADUATE PROGRAM

Although graduate students generally begin our program in the fall, in the spring of 2010 Songe Chanda and Ross Keogh, joined the graduate program. We were able to find enough elbow room for one and all as two other students successfully defended their theses and moved on. Colin Sorenson defended his thesis, “A comparative financial analysis of fast pyrolysis plants in southwest Oregon.” Helen Naughton chaired his committee, with Tyron Venn of the Forestry Department, Doug Dalenberg and Ranjan Shrestha as committee members. Ranjan Shrestha was chair of Rosemary Moore’s committee as she defended her work, “Do cash transfers impact migration? A study of the effects of Procampo and Progresa on short-term migration in Mexico.” Jeff Bookwalter served as one of two committee members along with Dan Spencer from the Environmental Studies Program.

In the Fall of 2010, three more students joined the program: Gunnar Malm, Emily Klungtvedt and Patrick Nicholson. Gunnar joined us from Chicago, Emily from Fargo and Patrick came from Virginia. The three of them served as teaching assistants during the 2010-2011 academic year.

Inspired by an undergraduate course at James Madison University, Patrick Nicholson was able to complete his coursework, as well as write and defend his thesis in a single year. In May he successfully defended his work, “Mean and volatility spillovers in emission allowance and fuel returns.” Ranjan Shrestha was his primary advisor and graduate committee chair. Derek Kellenberg was a committee member along with Keith Jakob of the Department of Accounting & Finance. Dmitri Murfin-Simmons also completed the program and defended his thesis, “Subjective well-being and relative income in Timor-Leste” at the end of spring semester, under the guidance of Jeff Bookwalter, committee chair, Doug Dalenberg and Wayne Freimund of the College of Forestry. All these fine theses are available electronically through the Mansfield Library.

To round out the program, this past spring, Maria Ferrini, a biology undergraduate started the graduate program. Maria, Gunnar and Emily join Eric Dale, Joe Ramler, Kelly Smith, Matt Betcher, Matt LaPalm, Martin Twer, Songe Chandra and Ross Keogh as they continue their studies, although several of them are closing in on their thesis defense.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

Jordan Rooklyn was the recipient of the Outstanding Senior Thesis Award this past spring as well as being recognized by Mortar Board as our Outstanding Senior of 2011. Michael Hauge was recognized for his outstanding work on the Senior Exit Exam. In the Spring of 2010 Jesse Agner was the recipient of the Outstanding Exit Exam, and Kevin Barnett and Winslow Hansen shared the Outstanding Senior Thesis Award.

Senior thesis students and their thesis titles in the Spring of 2010 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Thesis Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesse Agner</td>
<td>Determinants of domestic violence in Indonesia: A cross-sectional analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Barnett</td>
<td>The economic effects of dam removal on residential property values: A spatial hedonic modeling approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Brownlee</td>
<td>Can the way you pay lead to dismay? Evidence from UM study of subjective wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Cauthorn</td>
<td>Natural resource abundance and economic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam Doyle</td>
<td>Shirking among performance levels or why better players get longer contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina Eggensperger</td>
<td>Consumer willingness to pay for organic bananas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Winslow Hansen  
Land clearing in the Amazon: Ecosystem productivity and spatial interactions

Jason Harby  
A look into the demand for downhill skiing, and the potential effects of climate change

Jennifer Hepp  
The impact of higher education on Montana’s economy: revisiting an earlier study

Michael Hughes  
Anchoring and asymmetrical information: does equal access to information regarding services provided affect the cognitive bias of anchoring?

Zachary Khavari  
Happiness and the costs and benefits of working

Jared Kiess  
Appropriability, market power and innovation

Robert Lester  
Economics education and economics intuition

Kate Marcille  
Glacier National Park: What’s in a name? The effects of climate change on visitation trends and possible economic implications

Nathan McWilliams  
What causes crime? A look into crime rates in Montana’s counties

Alexandra Meador  
Restrictive abortion laws: their effects on price and demand for abortion

Carrier Morrell  
Climate and its effect on recruitment of blue chip athletes in college football

Leah Powell  
An economic analysis of weight: The weather effect

Kahen Reinhardt  
Measuring the impacts of No Child left behind

Teddi Roberts  
Drive for show, putt for dough: determinants of earnings on the PGA tour

Ryall Struyk  
Are high draft picks in the NFL overpaid relative to their performance?

Twenty-two students wrote senior theses this past year, here is a sampling of the thesis titles:

Jacob Allington  
Corruption: a cross section analysis

Nicole Auer  
Do medical- home- and community-based services reduce nursing home spending?

Kaci Bergstrom  
A history of women in the labor force in the 20th century

Adam Blaine  
Snow seduction: snow’s influence on Colorado skier visits

Griffin Brown  
Marriage, childbearing and education: An examination of labor market supply and potential earnings

Corrina Chung  
Income inequality and economic growth: A cross-country analysis

Guedem Dara  
Ivory Coast households living standards in the 1980s

Kacie Engum  
Social Welfare in Chile: An analysis of the impacts of Chile Solidario

Adam Finch  
The Neolithic revolution

Peter Harvey  
Suicide in the west: an economic perspective using state data

Michael Hauge  
Controlling global waste trade

Andrew Mohr  
Informal institutions and economic growth

Justin O’Leary  
Work-hours and well-being in South Africa

James Ottomeyer  
Anti-trustworthy: An economic analysis of college football’s postseason play on the market

Jordan Rooklyn  
Who is the Mexican migrant: new evidence on modern self-selection from Mexico

Kyla Roy  
The impact of multinationals on individuals in developing countries: Does McDonald’s make you happy?

Tyler Smith  
Musical geography: Economic geography of the music industry

Eric Stokes  
Underage drinking laws and the aggregate drinking level: a state panel data study

Carl Swanson  
An empirical analysis of consumer credit card behavior

Joe Veltkamp  
Patient protection and affordable health care act and the 2010 house elections

John Wilczynski  
Alumni gifting and sports success: What gives?
In the spring of 2010, The University of Montana hosted the 24th National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), “Meet Me in Montana.” The National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) is dedicated to promoting undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity in all fields of study. This annual gathering welcomes up to 2,600 scholars and their faculty mentors from all institutions of higher learning in the United States. NCUR creates a unique environment for the celebration and promotion of undergraduate student achievement. Four of our Economics majors, Kevin Barnett, Winslow Hansen, Kate Marcille and Teddi Roberts, presented their senior theses at this event. On April 15, 2011 at the UM Conference on Undergraduate Research two senior students in Economics, Jacob Allington and Jordan Rooklyn, gave outstanding presentations.

### Outstanding Exit Exam Award
- Michael Hauge 2011
- Jesse Agner 2010
- Emily Tutvedt 2009

### Outstanding Senior Thesis Award
- Jordan Rooklyn 2011
- Kevin Barnett 2010
- Winslow Hansen 2010
- Kevin Grzebielski 2009
- Sean Morrison 2009
- Tim Neidhardt 2008
- Garrett Blackburn 2007
- Mary Olson 2006
- Andrew Bissell 2005
- Edward Coffield 2004

### Outstanding Senior Award/Senior Recognition Day
- Jordan Rooklyn 2011
- Robert Lester 2010
- Sean Morrison 2009
- Claire Rasmussen 2008
- Sam Schabacker 2007
- Meredith Traeholt 2006
- Dmitri MurfinSimmons 2005
- Edward Coffield 2004
- Taylor “TJ” Comstock 2003
- Kelsey Keen 2002
- Anna Unger 2001
- Akiko Furuya 2000

### Martin & Rhoda Farris Scholarship
- Joe Ramler 2010
- Joe Ramler 2009
- Matt LaPalm 2008
- Benjamin Harris 2007
- Brian Vander Naald 2007
- Edward Coffield 2004
- Dan Loeffler 2003
- Joel Maynes 2002
- Brandon Fuller 2001

### J.H.T. Ryman Economics Fellowship
- Joe Ramler 2010
- Joe Ramler 2009
- Rosemary Moore 2008
- Colin Sorensen 2008
- Anna Iverson 2008
- Matthew LaPalm 2008
- Dustin Frye 2007
- Taylor Cook 2007
- Jordan Larson 2004
- Dan Loeffler 2003
- Robert Haidle 2002
- Sean Murphy 2002
- Joel Barranger 2002

### Louis F. Kinney Award
- Jacob Allington 2010
- Kate Marcille 2009
- Rebecca Nicolson 2008

### Kain/McKay Scholarship (to a junior major)
- Jordan Rooklyn 2010
- Robert Lester 2009
- Emily Tutvedt 2008
- Carl Van Haren 2007
- Sam Schabacker 2006
- Karen Gessaman 2005
- Jessica Daniels 2004
- Abigail Anthony 2003
- Joel Maynes 2002
- Kelsey Keene 2001

### David R. Paoli and Monica Conrad Paoli Economics Fund
- Joe Ramler 2009
- William Connell 2008
- Tim Neidhardt 2007
- Garrett Blackburn 2006
- Varun Giri 2005
- Dan Loeffler 2003

### Louis F. Kinney Award
- Jacob Allington 2010
- Kate Marcille 2009
- Rebecca Nicolson 2008
PUBLICATIONS


PRESENTATIONS

- Richard Erb, Northern Nevada International Center, main address: “A Bankrupt World: The United States in a Volatile International Financial System,” Reno, Nevada, March 10, 2010. His visit also included a brownbag lunch with students on global economic and financial development at the University of Nevada
- Derek Kellenberg, Rocky Mountain Empirical Trade Conference, Banff, Canada, May 2010.
- Derek Kellenberg, 4th World Congress of Environmental and Resource Economists, Montreal, Canada, July 2010.
- Derek Kellenberg, 1st Annual Association of Environmental and Resource Economists Conference, Seattle, WA, June 2011.
- Helen Naughton, Western Economics Association International 85th Annual Conference, Portland, OR, July 2010.
- Kay Unger, Western Social Science Association, Reno, Nevada, April 15-16, 2010
Dr. Abigail Anthony BA ’02, MA ’04, traveled with family and friends to Yellowstone in May 2010 for 9 days of hiking and, as she wrote, “I was so homesick for Montana! (In fact, my parents and sisters are returning in June for another week in Gardiner). We are determined to get back for a trip to Missoula and Glacier next year. The past year has been fun and exciting. Since finishing my Ph.D. at the University of Rhode Island in 2009 I have worked as a policy analyst for ENE (Environment Northeast), a non-profit organization researching and advocating for climate and energy solutions at the state, regional, and federal level. I was appointed by former Governor Carcieri to serve on Rhode Island’s Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council, a stakeholder group charged with overseeing the development and implementation of the state’s energy efficiency policies and programs. We have succeeded in significantly expanding the state’s investment in energy efficiency and improved our ranking by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy’s state scorecard to 7th in the nation in 2010. My husband and I got married in my parents’ backyard on a beautiful day in September and recently returned from our 3-week honeymoon of mountain biking across Cambodia, where we were blown away by the kindness and warmth of the people.”

Willie Connell, BA ’07, MA ’10, writes, “After being called home from Baja in January of 2010 by my gracious thesis advisor to sign and turn in my thesis I proceeded to ski every weekday at Snow Bowl for a month while filling out state applications (1 to be exact) in Helena to work as an economist on a green jobs grant. I was not hired but granted an interview that proved to be all I needed. Within a week of not getting the Helena job I was able to put my degree to use working at the Trail Head in Missoula as the summer rental and boat repair man. It was a great job for me and I know one day I will return to work at the Trail Head. I worked there through most of the following ski season taking advantage of free lift tickets and cheap gear in an absurd manner, which I only recently have paid off. I did not go to Baja this January for the first time since 2003 for an array of reasons and it turned out to work to my benefit because in mid-January I was called out of the blue by the Montana Department of Labor asking if I would like to interview for a job working as a labor economist on a healthcare grant. Within a month I was moving to Helena and my epic ski season at the Bowl had come to a screeching halt. I have also been lucky enough recently to have been “retained” – their word not mine – for an interim study committee on healthcare (SJ 18) which passed the legislature this year, we are still not sure we will get the money, however. I also have been asked to work on a grant that has just been submitted which would study substance abuse and suicide prevention in Montana’s rural and underserved regions, which turns out to be many. I am more excited about the substance abuse grant because I know that we do not spend enough money on prevention anywhere in the U.S. let alone Montana and SJ 18 will essentially be an exact extension of my current work pinpointing labor shortages in healthcare markets. My partner is especially annoyed with me as she recently finished the MSW program at UM and has worked in addictions, substance abuse, and harm reduction for years and now she thinks I am stealing her career due to my ‘Willie Luck.’ I remind her that I did write my undergrad thesis on healthcare, to which she responds each time ‘you had to write an undergraduate thesis.’ ”

Jessica Daniels, BA ’03, is managing a Downtown Building & Business Inventory for Downtown Missoula. With Jessica’s leadership, the MDA is taking a significant step toward compiling information on Downtown businesses and properties to create a Downtown Information Database, one of the goals of the Downtown Master Plan. Community volunteers, including Brandon Archer, a current economics student, administered the survey to Downtown businesses March 23-25. The outcome of a building-by-building survey of all business spaces is a powerful tool that will be used to better understand existing and potential commercial categories, future leasing opportunities, and gaps in the market. A sophisticated tracking system will allow for recruitment of tenants that will in turn attract more employers and investment in the local community. For more information on the project, contact Jessica at (406) 543-4238 or Jessica@missouladowntown.com.

Josh Davis, BA ’04, was heading back to Nepal this past May on his seventh trip to that country. He is continuing his work with the Mahankhal Chautari School, a free community school he is helping to create in the Kathmandu valley. If you want more information or would like to help Josh in his mission to bring basic education to those living on the margins of the global economy, contact him at mahankhal@gmail.com.
Brandon Fuller, BA ‘01, MA ‘03, writes, “My news is that I’m following my talented wife from San Francisco to the New York University Stern School of Business where she’ll start the full-time MBA program in July. We’re looking forward to it! I continue working with Paul Romer, primarily on a research non-profit called Charter Cities (www.chartercities.org), which is focused on the role of rules and urbanization in economic development. We’ll be back in Missoula next fall per Ali’s Alumni Association duties. Looking forward to that, too.”

Kevin Grzebielski, BA ’10, is engaged and attending the University of New Mexico School of Law. By a strange happenstance both he and his fiancée attend the University of New Mexico.

Ben Harris, MA ’07, is working full-time on research for his dissertation, and hopes to begin looking for a job in the fall of this year. His research is all about the economic experiences of minority groups. Specifically, he is researching sexual orientation-based wage differentials, the effect of open enrollment policies on ethnic sorting in elementary schools, and economic integration of recent immigrants to Canada. Speaking of immigrants to Canada, Ben is fully on-board the Canada train and is currently applying for permanent residency. He is grateful for any time he gets to spend with his wife, and he continues to enjoy gardens, food, drink, music, and friends – preferably all at the same time.

John D. Hines, BA ‘82, MA ‘85, was recently promoted to NorthWestern Energy’s Vice President - Supply. John joined NorthWestern in January 2005 as Director of Energy Supply Planning, became the chief Energy Supply Office in January 2008 before rising to his current position. Before joining NorthWestern, John worked as a consultant to public interest groups on energy issues, assisted in the development of energy efficiency programs, a state energy plan, and conducted financial analyses on specific generation proposals before the Alaska State Public Utility Commission. During this time, he also served as a financial consultant for the World Bank performing benefit-cost and exchange rate analyses. In 1989 he began work as a staff economist and subsequently became the administrator for the Montana office of the Northwest Power Planning and Conservation Council. Initially, he worked on the development and implementation of Model Conservation Standards for new residential and commercial construction. In addition, he participated in energy load forecasting, assisted in the development of multi-state electricity power plans, and advised several Montana governors on energy policy. In 2002, Governor Judy Martz appointed him to serve as one of Montana’s two representatives on the Council. He served on the Council’s Executive Committee and Power Committee and was closely involved in the development of the Council’s 5th Power Plan, which was completed in December 2004.

Joe Holliman, BA, BS ‘85, MA ‘93, is currently working for Alliant Energy, Madison Wisconsin as a Senior Asset Strategy Consultant. He works primarily with electric generation resource planning.

Sue Holmberg, MA ’00, Ph.D., writes, “I earned my Ph.D. in Economics at UMass, Amherst in 2010 and am now working as the Program Director at the Center for Popular Economics. Also, I’ve been living in Brooklyn with my husband and daughter for the past four years.”

Justin Johnson, BA ’05, writes “through a series of fits and starts I managed to land a permanent full-time position as a Research Program Specialist (Econ), Fire and Resource Assessment Program with California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). The last two years I fought my way up the bureaucratic ranks of the entry level analyst classification, and now find myself considerably challenged by my recent promotion. I finally managed to weave my way into a very interesting though challenging position within the department’s Forest Range Assessment Program.”

Rob Lester, BA ’10, is still living in South Bend finishing up the first year at Notre Dame and faced his comps this past June. Being an economist still seems like a good job, so he plans on sticking around and completing his doctorate.

Marianne Mitchell, BA ’74, currently serves as Chair for the Steelhead Summit Alliance (SSA), a consortium of conservation and other organizations based throughout the Western states that are coordinating their efforts to promote steelhead protection and propagation, principally through science-based initiatives.

Rosemary Moore, BA ’07, MA ’10, was hired at Northern Plains just two weeks before defending her thesis and on the very same day received a marriage proposal. Thursday, April 22, 2010 was an amazingly busy day for Rose!
Sean Morrison, BA ’09, is working for the Senate Finance Committee. “I briefly flirted with the idea of returning to school part time for a master’s degree in economics last year, but instead shifted from Senator Baucus’ personal office to the committee. That means, of course, I’m still living in our nation’s capital and still finding myself missing a winning sports franchise to cheer on. I think that returning to school is in the cards, but for the moment, I’m happily applying my economics degree as a research assistant for the tax team. It’s been a very busy spring, and in all likelihood, it will be a very busy summer.”

Tim Neidhardt, BA ’08, still lives in Hamburg and continues to work in the family owned construction business. “My involvement has shifted from managing job sites to carrying out internal projects to improve quality and cost-effectiveness in our administration. I recently got accepted into a one-year MBA program at IE in Madrid starting next year in April in order to prepare me to take over the family business afterward. I’m currently training for the Hamburg Marathon (my first!) on May 22, where I hope to run 3:30 hours. After a few years abstinence, I picked up my tennis racquets again to match with a friend of mine every other Saturday.”

Heather O’Loughlin, BA ’03, JD ’07, “I’m still counsel and legislative assistant for Senator Baucus in his Washington, D.C. office, handling education, judiciary, and banking/economic policy issues. I have been here for about three and a half years now, taking the position shortly after I graduated University of Montana School of Law. In personal news, I visited Ireland last fall with some of my family and my boyfriend. On our fourth day in County Clare (the land of my O’Loughlin ancestors), my boyfriend proposed as we were walking along Galway Bay. A very memorable trip.”

Eric Schuck, MA, ’95, was promoted to Professor and received tenure at Linfield College. Immediately following that he was recalled to active duty by the Navy Reserve and spent most of the last year in Kuwait as the Logistics Department Head for Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron 9. For this service, he was awarded the US Coast Guard Commendation Medal and three US Coast Guard Meritorious Team Awards with Operational “O” device.

Matt Slonaker, BA ’02, JD ’05, has “relocated to New York City after working on health care and nonprofit policy at the U.S. Senate Finance Committee for the past few years. Currently I do policy and advocacy work for Care for the Homeless, a nonprofit that provides health care and shelter to homeless people. The transition has been smooth and NYC grows on a person. But, coming from Ronan, MT, full adjustment to city-life is unlikely. In other news, as a proud new owner of a cabin on Flathead Lake, going back to Montana will be a little more exciting.”

Colin Sorenson, MA ’10, writes “I presented at the International Biomass Conference and Expo in Minneapolis and defended my MA thesis in May of 2010. After a summer of house projects and river floating, I landed a good job on campus [as a research economist in forest industry research] at the UM Bureau of Business and Economic Research. The down side is that I am no longer a stay at home dad so I don’t get to sing Itsy Bitsy Spider and Trot, Trot, to Boston with Sebastian on weekday mornings at the library. The good side is that he is now in daycare, which he LOVES, and now I get a paycheck once in a while instead of just bills.”

Kyle Stetler, BA ’06, is still at the Government Accountability Office in Seattle and Britt Carlson, BA ’06, is almost done with school at the University of Washington in Health Care Administration.

Brian Vander Naald, MA ’07, writes “Anne and I were married in a wonderful ceremony on her family’s farm outside of Columbus, Ohio this past June. We were surrounded by loved ones and topped off the night dancing outside in a thunderstorm. We like being married and plan to stay that way for a while :) I’m rounding out my fourth year of the PhD program here in Eugene and I expect to defend my prospectus in the middle of May. I also plan to be on the job market beginning fall 2011. Under the guidance of Trudy Cameron, my current work examines peoples’ willingness to trade off between the wellbeing of farmers, including the communities that depend on them, and animal welfare using the results of California’s Proposition 2 in the 2008 general election. In another work, I attempt to derive a demand curve for state park funding – also using precinct level voting data from California. Finally, I am using variation in application of the Clean Air Act (CAA) across jurisdictions in the state of California to examine the effects of the CAA on the dry cleaning industry.”