



Gardening in the Western Cape

Henry Kling '28

Gardening has long been an interest of Tim Delventhal's '26; when he had the opportunity to study abroad in South Africa, he jumped at the opportunity to research the food sovereignty and dietary impacts of gardening on a South African community.

Genadendal is a town in South Africa's Western Cape province with a long history of gardening. It's been a bedrock of the community, continuing throughout the 1900s, through apartheid, and into today. While studying at the University of Cape Town during his junior year, Tim had the opportunity to visit this community and research gardening's impact. Then, over the summer of 2025, he went back to continue his work.



Tim Delventhal '26 in the Western Cape

Tim's goal was to assess the dietary differences between gardeners and non-gardeners in Genadendal, and how that impacted each group's food sovereignty. To do so, he assessed interview subjects with the household dietary diversity scales (HDDS) and minimum dietary diversity for women (MDDW). While there are some challenges to self-reporting, these metrics are helpful to assess someone's dietary composition, and from there, assess the percentage of food originating from gardens, stores, and other members of the community.

By connecting with an NGO through the University, Tim found a few people willing to be interviewed at a local farmers' market. From there, he used a snowball method to find more interviewees, asking if each person he talked to knew if they knew anyone else he could talk. A local community leader was also generous enough to spend a few afternoons driving him around from house to house, interviewing people.

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Gardening Cont. & Alumni Updates

Gardening in the Western Cape Cont.

One large barrier facing the gardening community in Genadendal is the lack of funding for gardening support networks. Industrial farming has been the main focus of South Africa's post-apartheid government and has resulted in a lack of public funding for crucial tools for gardening, like adequate fences. Learning from the community there, Tim is currently working on a capstone project about his research in Genadendal.

Overall, Tim highly recommends studying abroad and, even more so, using study abroad as an opportunity to learn more about a new community. He also believes that gardening can serve as an important lens to get a bigger picture of someone's larger situation, and can provide insights into topics ranging from food sovereignty to climate change impact.

Alumni Updates

Sophia Weil '28



Gardens in Genadendal

Clemens Pilgram '15

Clemens Pilgram started a position as Assistant Professor of Real Estate and Community Development at Kansas State University's College of Architecture, Planning, and Design after completing his PhD at USC Price School of Public Policy and a postdoc at the University of Cincinnati's Real Estate Center. He was on campus in October for a research talk, "Homeownership and Reinvestment: A Tale of Two Cities," co-sponsored by the Geography and Economics departments.



Dio Cramer '20

Dio Cramer '20 is working on a First Kiss Map project, studying the psychogeography of where people in the Twin Cities have had first kisses. They will turn this data into a physical map including the various stories and locations of memorable first kisses. In October, their project was featured in [The Minnesota Star Tribune](#). You can submit your own first kiss story [using this link](#).



Redrawing the Map

Sophia Weil '28

GIS lab instructor and manager Ashley Nepp takes maps beyond the page by teaching her students how to humanize space through narrative storytelling. Ashley has a master's in GIS and is a cartographer by trade, so she has observed the detriments of purely data-driven cartography. She believes that the goal of creative cartography is to make maps more inclusive.

"Historically, maps have been negative actors in the world and they've been leveraged to divide people and cultures," Ashley said. "Even in modern times, they're used a lot for surveillance and keeping people out of places. Creative cartography is about expanding what maps do in our world. [Maps are] not just about exploitation, categorization of things, and where things are in space—they're about who lives there."

Creative cartography redefines the relationship between maps and data, asserting that data must be contextualized and cannot always be taken as truth. Data often lacks representation because cartographers must make choices and generalizations. Creative cartography allows maps to be more abstract and interpretive, enabling inclusivity of disenfranchised communities.

"I want [people] to feel empowered to have control over the story that's told about the place that they belong to, the place that they grew up, or their particular story, because everyone has a different relationship with place," Ashley said.

Ashley teaches students about the creative cartography world through the semester-long construction of a cultural atlas in her Cultural Atlas Production class (GEOG 394). A cultural atlas relies on narrative storytelling and focuses on the people and happenings in a space. Each student completes a two-page spread. They choose a topic of interest, collect data, and draft and design their spread in Adobe Illustrator.

"I make [students] choose what they're going to focus on for that semester," Ashley said. "There are four options: are you going to focus on storytelling and narrative aspects? Are you going to focus on data collection and data wrangling? Are you going to focus on your design work? That influences the topic choice. I say, 'What do you want to get out of this class at the end of it?'"

The cultural atlas is a uniquely imaginative mapping and storytelling medium that allows students to take what they learned in Introduction to GIS and apply it in a creative way.



Ashley Nepp's GEOG 394: Cultural Atlas Production class from Spring 2025



Cover of the upcoming cultural atlas

"What's powerful about [the cultural atlas] is it creates an archive of stories, but they're captured spatially," Ashley said. "I think a lot of people respond to maps and visuals more than they do text on a page. It's a cool way to enter a place and explore it."

The upcoming cultural atlas is not yet available, but you can preorder a copy using [this link](#).

A Look Back on the Semester

Henry Kling '28

Geography Awareness Week



Mac celebrated Geography Awareness Week with games, snacks, pin making, shared map creating and more.

Winter Dinner

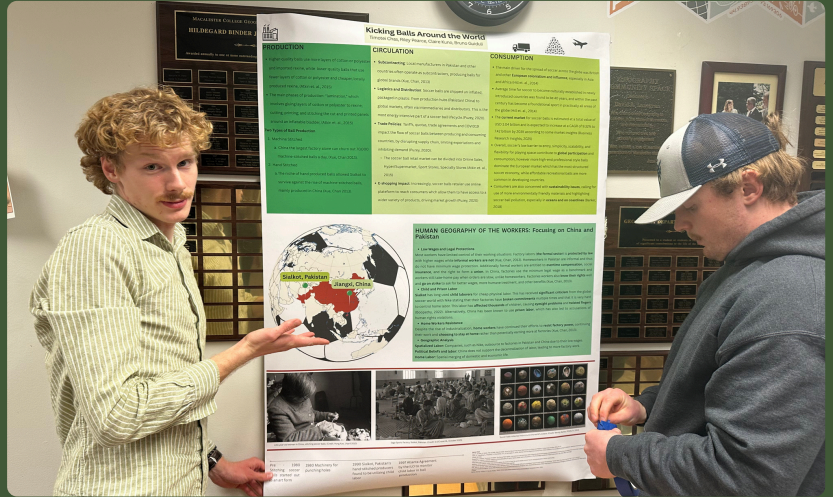
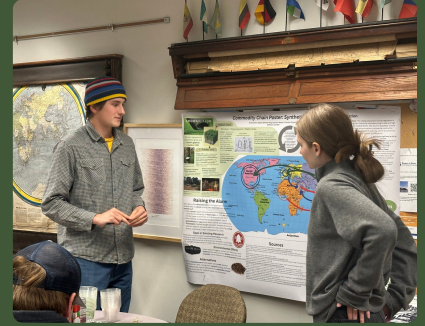
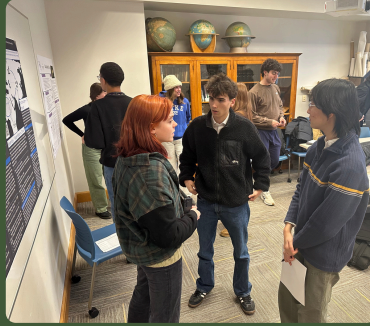


This year's Winter Dinner was just as good as ever, with great food and great people. During the dinner, Mac Geography was honored to present the Crystal Globe Award to Marvin Roger Anderson for his years of service as a Rondo community leader.

Goings-on in Geography



A happy Halloween!



Lauren Gerlowski's Geog: 111 class presented in a mock poster conference on their research into the economic geography of global commodities.

Geography Capstones



As part of the culmination of their geography career at Mac, a group of seniors presented their capstones to the department after a semester of hard work and research. Professor Bill Moseley also invited his senior seminar over to his house for dinner to celebrate their work this semester.

Professor Bill Moseley

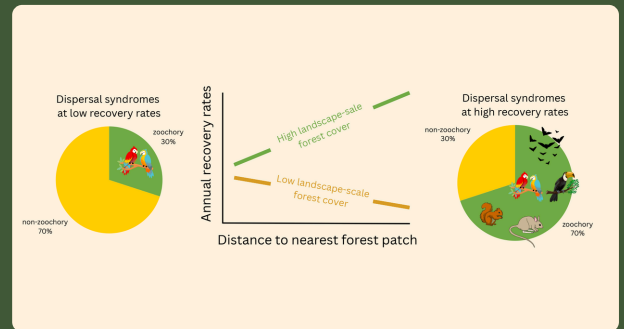
In October, Professor Bill Moseley received a Trustee Award for 2025, recognizing "faculty excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service."

Professor Xavier Haro-Carrión

Professor Xavier Haro-Carrión, alongside other scientists from Ecuador, Belgium, Australia and the UK, investigated how environmental and landscape factors influence mountain forest regeneration in the Andes of Ecuador. Haro-Carrión used satellite imagery to derive landscape predictors that were incorporated into analyses alongside ground-based inventories of tree regeneration. The findings show that forest cover and distance to existing forest are particularly important for the regeneration of animal-dispersed tree species.

"I joined the project during the pandemic, when fieldwork was limited and many researchers turned to remote sensing to advance ecological research," Haro-Carrión said. "I became involved because the topic closely aligns with my own research interests, though focused on a different forest type and with a stronger ecological emphasis."

The article from *Biotropica* can be accessed [through this link](#).



Visiting Instructor Lauren Gerlowski

Visiting instructor Lauren Gerlowski co-authored a paper entitled "Whither Chat-GPT: Generative AI and Teaching Introduction to Human Geography." This paper reflects how Lauren & her co-authors navigated the widespread usage of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) models in introductory human geography classrooms at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In the paper, the authors discuss how GAI first appeared, how to connect GAI to course content through digital geography lectures, and present reflections on navigating GAI in course writing assignments. While most of the work in this paper is applicable for large lecture classrooms which are uncommon at Macalester, Lauren has utilized many of the writing assignment techniques discussed in her classes at Macalester.

The article from *Journal of Geography* can be accessed [through this link](#).

Projections from the Chair & Lanegran Day

Projections from the Chair

Eric Carter, Geography Chair

This time of year, seniors may start to feel anxious about life after Macalester.

Unfortunately, the class of 2026 might not be graduating into a healthy job market.

Unemployment is up slightly, the wage premium for college graduates may be declining, and many people are starting to doubt the value of higher education, especially in the raw terms of ROI, or “return on investment.”

A regular report from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, [The Labor Market for Recent College Graduates](#), puts recent figures in the context of long-term trends. History shows that the economy has its ups and downs, and the labor market is cyclical.

In any event, I think Geography seniors have reasons to be optimistic about their prospects. By and large, Geography majors leave Macalester with a flexible mindset that makes it possible to adapt to changing conditions, along with a capacity to think critically, view problems holistically and at different scales, and connect theory to action.

Maybe this explains why recent college graduates with a degree in Geography have a lower unemployment rate than their peers in such majors as computer science, chemistry, economics, psychology, and mathematics, and on par with biochemistry and philosophy, according to the same Federal Reserve Bank report. (One caveat: this data was last updated in 2023.)

Let me be clear: there is nothing easy and predictable about the world today. But still, we think you’re ready for it!

We hope you enjoy a safe and peaceful holiday season, and see you in 2026!



Lanegran Day Speaker Selected

Henry Kling '28

Macalester Geography graduate and Senior Editor at the New York Times, Tim Wallace '02, will be the 2026 Lanegran Day Keynote Speaker. His featured talk is titled “Newsroom Geography.”

ography, and geospatial efforts across The Times, on topics ranging from the war in Ukraine to voting patterns around common spaces like IHOP and Starbucks.

The department is excited to welcome Tim back and hear about his unique perspective on geography in the modern world. Information about the time and location can be found on Page 8.

Register for the 2026 David A. Lanegran Day Keynote & Dinner below:
[Register Here](#)



Tim Wallace '02



One of Tim’s Maps: Population Study I, Rhombille 48

This and more of Tim’s maps can be found on his website: timwallace.art

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dave Lanegran Day

February 20th, 2026, 5:00 pm,
AGH Ballroom | Kagin Commons

American Association of Geographers (AAG) Meeting

March 17th - 21st, 2026
San Francisco, CA

Midwest Undergraduate Geography Symposium (MUGS)

Saturday, May 2nd, 2026
Hosted by Macalester Geography Department

NEXT ISSUE

- Winter Break Recap
- Student Research Spotlight
- And much more!

Alumni, What's Up?

We've heard from several of you in response to our past calls to action and hope to include a special alumni updates section in a future edition.

If you've been out and about, tell us what you've been up to! Where in the world are you? What have you been doing since you left Macalester? Have you traveled to far off places? Written a book? Started a new business?

[Submit an update here](#)

Want More?

Keep up with the wider Macalester Geography community by joining our LinkedIn Group (Macalester College Geography Network), Facebook Group (Macalester College Geographers), or follow us on Instagram (@macgeography).



Correction

In the article on summer research in Tanzania (Vol 4, Issue 1, Oct, 2025), the local university was incorrectly identified. It should be: Mwalimu Julius Nyerere University of Agriculture and Technology, located in Butiama, Tanzania. We also regret that the title of the article did not adequately reflect its content.

THE GRATICULE

Macalester Geography Department Newsletter

Newsletter Editors

Henry Kling '28

Sophia Weil '28



Departmental Support

Eric Carter

Constance DeLage



Support Geography!

When giving to Macalester, consider making a gift to the Geography Department. To direct your gift to our program, please select "other" in the "designate gift to" option and write "Geography" in the comments. Your gift will support high-impact activities, including field trips and professional development opportunities for students that are a signature part of the Macalester Geography experience.

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