

# Department of Statistics at Kansas State University

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## Departmental Retirements

The face of the department is clearly changing, as long-time faculty members Jim Higgins and John Boyer enter retirement from the department in the summer of 2012.



**Dr. Higgins and his wife Mary Lou**

**Jim Higgins** joined the faculty in the department in 1980, coming to K-State from a faculty position at the University of South Florida. Prior to that, his first faculty job after earning his doctorate was at the University of Missouri-Rolla, now called Missouri University of Science and Technology, where he and Dallas Johnson began their academic careers in 1970.

Jim is a native of central Illinois, his hometown being Lewistown, which is near Spoon River, made famous in Edgar Lee Masters' work "The Spoon River Anthology". He earned his B.S. degree from the University of Illinois, his M.S. from Illinois State University (both were in mathematics) and then completed his Ph.D. in statistics at the University of Missouri-Columbia under the guidance of Dave Hansen. His dissertation was titled "Convergence Rates for Weighted Sums of Independent Random Variables."

Jim's primary research interests have been in nonparametric statistics and reliability theory. In addition to his personal research he has published 3 textbooks: "An Introduction to Probability and Stochastic Modeling" (jointly written with Sallie Keller-McNulty), "An Introduction to Modern Nonparametric Statistics", and "A SAS Companion for Nonparametric Statistics" (jointly with Scott Richter). He has served as major professor to 12 Ph.D. students at K-State (plus three at his previous universities), and has directed 23 M.S. students over the course of his career. He is the author or co-author of 110 scientific publications, many of them coming from his duties as a consultant for Kansas State Research and Extension.

Jim also has a very strong interest in the teaching of statis-

**Dr. Higgins...continued on page 2**



**Dr. Boyer and his wife Lora**

**John Boyer** joined the KSU faculty a year later in 1981, having been encouraged to apply by Dallas Johnson (hmm....). He left a faculty position at Southern Methodist University in Dallas to move to K-State.

John grew up (maybe it's better to say that he "came of age"??) in York, Nebraska, about three hours north of Manhattan. He earned a B.S. in mathematics at Nebraska before doing a couple of years of service in the U.S. Army, including a year in South Korea. Following his military experience, he earned M.S. and Ph.D. degrees at Michigan State University. Dennis Gilliland was his Ph.D. advisor and the title of his dissertation was "On the Compound and Empirical Bayes Problem," with the degree awarded in 1976.

John's primary interests from a research point of view have been in nonparametric statistics and in statistical education. He has supervised two Ph.D. students, and 23 M.S. students. Over the years he has served on dozens of committees for M.S. and Ph.D. students both from within the department and from other departments in the university.

John's appointment has also had a consulting aspect to it. He has indicated that the variety of problems and scientific questions he has dealt with over the years has made his job stimulating and interesting. It has also gotten him involved with the NCCC-170 organization, a committee of the North Central association of experiment station directors that is focused on Research Advances in Agricultural Statistics.

**Dr. Boyer...continued on page 2**

## Departmental Retirements...continued

### Dr. Higgins...continued from page 1

tics. He helped design the department's studio classroom and the curriculum for the course that is now Statistics 325. He came up with the novel concept of Planet X where students use statistics to explore an unknown world. He has also provided significant leadership in developing the department's distance education offerings. His distance version of Statistics 703 (Statistical Methods for the Natural Sciences) has filled up three times a year (fall, spring, and summer terms) for a number of years, and is taken by students from all over the country. It has a strong reputation and has been a boon to the department.

Jim was also the winner of a William Stamey award; an honor bestowed by the College of Arts & Sciences at K-State for outstanding teaching efforts. Jim has been a leader in the department. He spent five years (1990-1995) as department head and has led nearly every committee and task that the department has. He has also been active on the regional and national level, with his contributions in all areas being recognized when he was named a Fellow of the American Statistical Association in 1999.

Jim and wife Mary Lou have been married for 45 years. They are the proud parents of two sons. Eric is Professor and department head in the Department of Finance in the College of Business Administration at Kansas State. Michael is a Ph.D. candidate in Statistics at the University of California-Berkeley. Eric and wife Cathlene have provided the Higgins with 3 grandchildren, Dylan (12) and twins Hannah and Tyler (10).

Jim indicates that "K-State has been a great place to work. I've thoroughly enjoyed my 32 years here. I expect to continue for awhile with my Stat 703 distance education course and to attend departmental seminars from time to time. Mary and I have no big travel plans. We like to visit Rocky Mountain National Park. We may also make it to Branson once in awhile where they bring in old folks like me by the busload. With gardening, model trains, guitar playing, and grandkids, I imagine I'll have plenty to keep me busy."

### Dr. Boyer...continued from page 1

John's teaching efforts have been strong as well. He has won two Stamey awards from K-State's College of Arts & Sciences for his efforts. He has developed two courses that have been staples in the department's distance education efforts and has taught those courses for a number of years. He has also spent a number of years as the department's representative to the committee within the College of Engineering that oversees their statistics courses and offerings.

John has fulfilled a number and variety of leadership roles in the department and across the profession. In addition to having taken on most of the committee assignments available within the department at some time or another, he spent seven and a half years as department head in the early 2000's. He has written the majority of the text for the department's newsletter over the years. He has been the primary faculty organizer for the department's annual Conference on Applied Statistics in Agriculture over the last several years. At the regional level he has served as both President and Council of Sections Representative for the Kansas-Western Missouri Chapter of the American Statistical Association. At the national level, he has chaired the ASA's Council of Chapters, Section on Statistical Education, Archives Committee, and Council of Sections. He spent 10+ years as the judging coordinator for the ASA's International Science and Engineering Fair prize. He served a three year term on the association's Board of Directors. In recognition of his leadership and commitments to the profession, John was named a Fellow of the American Statistical Association in 1995 and was honored with the association's Founders Award in 2006.

John and wife Lora have been married for 42 years. They have two sons; Paul who resides in San Francisco, and Joe who lives in Manhattan. Their long-term plans include a move to the family farm in Nebraska where John's mother's family was raised. They have a big farmhouse and some farmland waiting there, and such a move will put them both back near their roots and closer to a good bit of extended family. But they warn not to expect this to happen right away; they still have lots of ties and friendships in Manhattan. On the more immediate front, they have plans to travel with an ASA delegation organized under the auspices of the People to People program to Russia (Moscow and St. Petersburg) this coming September. They are both excited about it.

## Classified Staff News



**Pam Schierer**, Administrative Specialist/Business Manager, celebrated a milestone birthday in January. Pam has been with the department 19 + years now. She took her annual camping trip to the Black Hills of South Dakota with her sister in September. She continues to work on her passion - rubber stamping.

In August, the department hired **Teresa Zerbe**, as the Senior Administrative Assistant. Teresa is the coordinator for the Ag Conference, as well as the department receptionist, and maintains the departmental website.



## Winston Yang



Shie-Shien (Winston) Yang, a long-time faculty member in the department, passed away on Saturday, June 30, 2012, after a long and courageous battle with prostate cancer.

Winston was born in China, but with the communist take-over imminent, his family (his father was a successful businessman) fled to Hong Kong when he was a preschooler. He was raised in Hong Kong through high school, but came to the U.S. at 18 to go to college. He was a strong and capable student in the mathematical sciences, earning a B.S. in mathematics at Iowa State, and an M.A. in mathematics at the University of Wisconsin before turning to statistics. He then earned M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in statistics at Iowa State University, where his doctoral work was directed by Distinguished Professor Dr. Herbert A. David and was completed in 1976.

Upon finishing his degree, he spent two years on a post-doctoral appointment at M.I.T., then a year as an Assistant Professor at Indiana University before joining the faculty at Kansas State University in 1979. He immediately found K-

State to his liking and rose rapidly through the ranks to Associate Professor and Professor.

Winston contributed to the success of the Department of Statistics on many fronts. He collaborated with several researchers across campus, including experimenters from engineering, grain science, food and nutrition science, veterinary medicine and economics, and became co-author of many research articles. He also made connections that led him to serve as a committee member for many graduate students outside the department.

His contributions as teacher and researcher within the department are considerable as well. He taught a wide variety of graduate level classes and served as major professor for several Ph.D. and M.S. students in Statistics, along with providing service as a committee member for many students within the department. He was author of many technical articles appearing in prominent Statistical research journals with an emphasis on research in nonparametric statistical inference.

Outside of the office, Winston was a sportsman and an outdoorsman. He took up both fencing and tennis and was reasonably accomplished at both. Most of all, however, he and his wife Jeanne loved spending time in the mountains. They regularly headed toward the Estes Park, Colorado area for vacations, where his daughter remembers all the family members taking baths in a horse trough in the early years. Eventually they bought a small house in Estes Park proper and spent numerous summers there. They loved the proximity of Rocky Mountain National Park for hiking and climbing, but also Estes Park itself for the summer music concerts, craft fairs and other activities.

For one summer in the early 90's, the family gave up its Estes Park routine to go to Olympic National Park. There Winston spent the summer season as a volunteer ranger with the National Park Service, working out of the North Fork Ranger Station. He told many stories of working up and down the trails of the park and although he found it somewhat demanding work, he clearly found it most rewarding as well.

Winston was a deeply religious and faithful man. One attribute of his that was pointed out by several was his unwillingness to judge and criticize others or their ideas. Additionally, Winston was a pretty private person, perhaps a bit reserved. Despite that, teaching was one of his first loves. He clearly loved it and worked hard at it, and that came through to his students. Since his death, the department has received many acknowledgments of Winston's positive influence on the educations and lives of graduates. Perhaps the following quote best typifies the reactions: "That's very sad to hear. Dr. Yang was my first interaction with the Department of Statistics for the 510 course as a math major. He was a wonderful instructor, and I always found him to be encouraging and positive when I moved on to the graduate program. In my experience he was a gentle, warm man who truly loved students and teaching. He will be missed."

Stay up to date with the Department of Statistics at  
<http://www.k-state.edu/stats>

## Doris Grosh

Doris Grosh, a Ph.D. graduate of the department and former faculty member, passed away peacefully with her three daughters near her, on Friday, June 8, 2012.



Doris was a most remarkable person. She earned a BS from the University of Chicago, then received her MS from K-State in 1949. At this point, she stepped away from academia to have and then raise a family of three daughters. In the late '60s, she went back to graduate school as a nontraditional student in statistics, and earned her Ph.D. from the department in 1969, with Shelly Zacks as her major professor.

After completing her degree, she took a faculty position primarily in the Department of Industrial Engineering at K-State, but with a portion of her appointment in the Department of Statistics. She was the first woman faculty member in K-State's College of Engineering. She attended faculty meetings in both departments and participated as a full colleague in each. As a part of her contribution to the Department of Statistics, she taught both of the courses in the two-course sequence in statistics which is regularly offered to undergraduate engineering majors numerous times. Eventually (mid-1980's) her appointment moved fully into engineering.

Doris was a very accomplished and popular teacher. In the Engineering College, she was universally referred to by the students as "Momma Grosh". (Her husband was "Poppa Grosh".) She worked her students hard, but worked herself hard as well. One of the things she was well-known for was knowing the names of all of the students in her classes. At least some semesters she shot pictures of her students, then memorized the names that went with those pictures. She even did that in classes whose size approached 200. That is a trait that students found to be most welcoming.

Doris has been retired from the university for some time now; maybe 15-20 years, but certainly not inactive. She spent her retirement years donating her time and energy to many good causes. One such cause is the Manhattan Arts Center. She and her husband Gene donated a substantial chunk of money to the Center to refurbish the building (it had formerly been a grocery store, so you can imagine that this took some doing) into a theater/arts complex, and the main hall there is named after them. But they both gave enormous amounts of time, energy, and expertise to that operation as well.

Doris also served a number of years as a volunteer poll worker for the Riley County government. It got to be a joke among a number of her friends that when they went to vote she was the person checking names of potential voters against the lists of registered voters in her voting precinct and she always asked their names, even when it was someone she had known for 20 or more years. She wanted to be quite certain that there were no irregularities or questions.

Doris was an exceptional person. She had, as one of her colleagues put it, an exceptionally sweet personality and a most generous soul. She was a treasure for both the university and the general community of Manhattan, not to mention her wide circle of friends.

## Basketball Pool

Another departmental basketball pool is in the books. For anyone who is not aware, this is a contest among faculty, students, and alumni (plus their families) of the department to predict the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament.

This year's contest was one of the closest in history. It ended in the three-way tie among Chris Bilder (PhD '00), Kimberly Peschka Bilder (Chris' wife), and Jeremiah Aakre of the Mayo Clinic. Each picked winners of 22 games. Although not a record, 22 is a higher-than-average winning score.

As many of you know, we also have a team competition with the Department of Statistics and Probability at Michigan State (alma mater for several K-State faculty mem-

bers). After having lost to MSU for several years in a row, K-State triumphed this year. John Boyer, who annually coordinates both the within-department contest and the competition with MSU, attributes this success to the fact that both Kansas and K-State went relatively deep into the tournament, while MSU and the University of Michigan made unexpectedly early departures (there is a tendency for both groups to pick home teams, and that seems to have worked to our advantage this year).



If you would like to try your luck in next year's competition (there is no money involved; only pride and/or bragging rights), drop a note to [jboyer@ksu.edu](mailto:jboyer@ksu.edu) and he'll add you to the list of those who receive the entry forms in the spring.

## Recent Graduates

### BS

**Maria Hoheusle** from Garden City, Kansas has finished her BS degree in the department. She is currently working as a database marketing analyst for Lionshare Marketing in Lenexa, Kansas. Lionshare is a marketing firm for the healthcare industry which markets mail campaigns and sells database structures which house all hospital activity data for patients and prospective patients for their clients.

### MS

**Shu Chen** worked with Weixing Song for her MS. She has taken a job with the Human Resources branch of Wenzhou-Kean University in China .

**Mingwei Fei's** major professor was Paul Nelson.

**David Hembree** wrote his report with Paul Nelson.

**Garth Highland** wrote his report under that tutelage of Leigh Murray. He has taken an analytical position with Adams Land and Cattle Company, a huge cattle feeder in Broken Bow, Nebraska.

**Antoinette Leiker** worked with Weixing Song for her MS report. She is currently working for the Cabelas Corporation in Sidney, Nebraska.

**Xin Li's** major professor was Paul Nelson.

**Shan Lui** worked for Weixing Song and is now looking for employment in New York.

**Natalya Makarova** wrote her MS report under Paul Nelson. She is currently looking for employment.



**Eric Mann** did his MS work with Haiyan Wang. He has taken a position with a private actuarial consulting firm in Kansas City.

**Dustin Maurer** worked for Haiyan Wang; after finishing his work at K-State, he has entered the PhD program in bioinformatics at the University of Kansas.

**Liang Peng's** major professor was Haiyan Wang. Since earning his degree, he has begun work on a doctorate in Computer Science at Utah State University.

**Muditha Perera** wrote her MS report under the direction of Paul Nelson.

**Joel Vetter** studied under Leigh Murray.

**Sijia Xiang** finished the work for her MS with Weixin Yao. She has remained in the department's graduate program and will pursue a doctoral degree.

**Yi Zhang** worked under Weixing Song and has taken a position with Bank of America in Charlotte, North Carolina.

### PhD

**Rajarshi Dey** worked for Paul Nelson in the course of his doctoral dissertation work. He has taken a visiting faculty position at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

**Champa Magalla** wrote her dissertation under the advising of Dr. Jim Neill. She has returned to her native Sri Lanka where she has taken an academic position.

**Dilan Paranagama** did his doctoral research with Gary Gadbury. He has taken a position with Biostat Solutions, Inc., a consulting company to the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. They specialize in unusual designs for experiments, a quality that Dilan found attractive.

**Nishantha (Sam) Samarakoon** was a student of Weixing Song for his doctoral work. He has taken a visiting faculty position in the Department of Statistics at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, OK.

**Lin Xie** worked on her dissertation under Paul Nelson. She is now an assistant professor in the Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. She does teaching (Statistics in Research, Nonparametric Methods in Data Analysis, Univariate and Multivariate Models, Experimental Design and Analysis, as well as coordinating the Research Methods - writing - course for the department), research (related to Aquaculture and Fisheries), and provides statistical consulting services to faculty, staff, and students around the campus. Lin and daughters (Sarah, Charis, and Emily) currently live in nearby White Hall, Arkansas.

## From the Department Head's Desk

Greetings from the K-State Department of Statistics. This past year has been another year of significant activities within the department. Consistent with the university's visionary goal of being recognized as one of the nation's Top 50 Public Research Universities by the year 2025, faculty members have been engaged in many scholarly activities, including participation at national and international conferences, research grant proposals, interdisciplinary collaborations and directing our large contingent of graduate students. At last count, sixteen students earned MS degrees during the 2011-2012 school year, along with five PhD graduates. In addition, a significantly revised upper level curriculum will be introduced beginning this fall term. The new and revised course offerings reflect the current expertise of the faculty, and will provide students with a quality education in line with developments of the discipline.



The department is once again pleased to make several significant scholarship awards this past year to very deserving undergraduate and graduate students (please see related article in this newsletter for recipients). The opportunity to award these scholarships, along with university Foundation Scholarships, greatly enhances the department's ability to attract and retain qualified students planning a career in Statistics. The faculty and students sincerely appreciate the support and generosity of all contributors to the important missions of the department.

We are pleased to announce Dr. Perla Reyes and Dr. Chris Vahl will be joining the faculty in the fall 2012 semester. Perla earned her doctorate at the University of Wisconsin with research interests in spatial-temporal statistics, Bayesian nonparametric methods, model selection and complex networks with applications in environmental statistics, business and econometrics. She has spent the two previous years working as a postdoctoral associate in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Statistics at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Chris earned his doctorate at Kansas State University with research and consulting interests in the design and analysis of experiments, mixed models and sampling of finite populations. Most recently, he has been a member of the statistics group at Elanco Animal Health and his twelve month appointment at K-State will involve dedicated consulting with university scientists in agriculture, biosciences and engineering. We look forward to their arrival in Manhattan this August.

As we welcome new and returning faculty this fall term, we extend congratulations and best wishes to Dr. John Boyer and Dr. Jim Higgins as they begin retirement this summer (please see related article in this newsletter). Jim and John are each recognized for over 30 years of dedicated service to the department. Each has contributed much to the success of the department on many fronts, including administrative service as department head, long-standing research programs often involving collaborations with scientists across campus, innovative teaching at the undergraduate and graduate level, and serving as major professor or committee member for many MS and PhD students both within and outside the department. Jim and John were honored this past spring at the annual university Faculty Retiree Ceremony in the Alumni Center, and each has been designated Professor Emeritus of Statistics. In addition, a reception was held in the department during June where friends in the department and across campus had an opportunity to wish Jim and John the very best in retirement and express appreciation for their many accomplishments and contributions to the department and university.

On a very sad note, the department marked the passing of former faculty members Dr. Doris Grosh and Dr. Shie-Shien (Winston) Yang this past June. Winston and Doris contributed much to the development and success of the department during their many years on campus. Please see related articles in this newsletter for remembrances of each and recognition of their many accomplishments and dedicated service to the department and university.

The department's signature Conference on Applied Statistics in Agriculture was held this past spring in Manhattan. The twenty-fourth annual conference featured keynote address and a technical workshop presented by Dr. Robert Tempelman of Michigan State University. Dr. Tempelman's well received presentations covered topics of Bayesian inference with utility geared for typical agricultural experiments, including quantitative genetics and genomics, along with an interesting perspective on hierarchical Bayesian modeling as compared with the generalized linear mixed model. The department looks forward to the next year's conference at which Dr. Kevin Wright of Pioneer Hi-Bred / DuPont will present the keynote address and workshop.

In closing, I mention significant change in the College of Arts and Sciences leadership. In particular, the department welcomed Dr. Peter Dorhout as the Dean of the College on January 1, 2012. Shortly after arriving in Manhattan, Dean Dorhout began visits with all departments within the College and has already initiated several beneficial programs, including the Faculty Enhancement Grant program designed to facilitate junior faculty research activities. The department has greatly appreciated the leadership of outgoing Interim Dean, Dr. Joseph Aistrup. At the departmental level, our excellent faculty, staff and graduate student body will continue to align the department with university strategic planning in order to achieve K-State 2025 aspirations. If you happen to pass through the Flint Hills, please stop by the department for a visit. Our alumni and friends are always welcome.

Jim Neill

## Statistic Department Scholarships

The department is grateful for the generosity of its graduates, former faculty members and their families who have provided funding for the scholarships listed below. We are proud to introduce you to our students whose achievements have earned them these honors.

### *Holly and Beth Fryer Scholarship in Statistics*

**Yixin Chen** is a PhD student in the department, studying statistics and general and longitudinal data analysis in particular. Her major professor is Dr. Weixin Yao.

Yixin comes from a very close family of four and she treasures her time with them. She was born in Dengfeng City, and grew up in Zhengzhou City. These two cities are in Henan Province in the center of China. Dengfeng City is famous for its Shaolin Temple which is the birthplace of Chinese kung fu. Zhengzhou City is the capital of Henan Province, and it is famous as one of the important birthplaces of Chinese civilization.

Yixin's interest in things mathematical and statistical started early. She remembers specifically an incident in fifth grade, when she was assigned to be the class' math course-monitor. Although she didn't feel that she was the strongest mathematics student in the class, the effort she put forth to do the task was most successful and awakened in her a strong interest in mathematical subjects. She went on to study mathematics in college.



**Yixin at Niagara Falls**

After obtaining her undergraduate degree in China, she came to the United States to further pursue her studies. She earned an MS degree in mathematics at Pittsburg State University in Kansas, and while doing so, took several courses in statistics, and got a chance to talk to some professors who work in the field. She has always been interested in areas that have a relationship with the real world. After learning more about statistics, and having an advisor with ties to the K-State Department of Statistics, she opted to come to the university for her doctoral studies in Statistics. Being awarded a graduate teaching assistantship in the department was also a big plus.

In her free time, she likes to read novels and listen to relaxing music. She also likes travelling to different places visiting friends and enjoying different cultures. Cooking is another source of relaxation for her; she enjoys the process of making some vegetables, meat or fruit into some delicious food.

### *Ron and Rae Iman Scholarship in Statistics*

**Hannah Manry** has a lot of K-State connections; both her parents and her older sister are alumni. It seemed quite natural for her to pick K-State. This Topeka native is now a senior statistics major. She became interested in statistics during high school when she constantly heard percentages thrown around and could not help but wonder where the actual source of the information was coming from and more importantly, if the information was accurate. The more she looked into the facts, the more she discovered how statistics can be used in essentially every field. She began to read books about statistics and has had a desire to learn more on the subject since.



**Hannah on the right with her friend, Jessica Adams on the left.**

She joined a sorority her first week on campus, and lived in the sorority house the following three years; that was a great source of activity for her. She has also been very involved in a campus ministry at KSU that she feels has helped her to grow in her faith.



**Gavin Koester** is senior from Concordia, Kansas, and a very busy guy, as he is completing a triple major (statistics, economics, and mathematics) at K-State. His dad farms, his mother is a school teacher, and he has a younger brother and sister at home. His big interest in statistics is in the area of econometrics. He cites his faith, his father, Calvin Coolidge, and free-market thinkers as major influences in his life. He would like to put all his training to work as an economist, possibly with Koch Industries. In his spare time he enjoys reading and running.

## Arthur D. and LaVonnia B. Dayton Scholarship

**Indu Seetharman** is an MS student in the department from Chennai, a metropolitan city in southern India. After getting married to her husband Praveen, she moved to United States in March 2009. Her educational background includes an undergraduate degree in Statistics and MBA in Finance and Marketing, both from University of Madras. Prior to coming to the US, Indu worked as a Quality Program manager for Hewlett-Packard in Chennai.

In addition to her interest in her studies, Indu is particularly grateful to be a graduate teaching assistant for undergraduate Statistics courses. She knows this has helped her hone her communication, teaching and leadership skills. Her outside activities include active involvement in the student government at Kansas State University, where she served as Graduate Student Senator representing the College of Arts and Sciences for spring 2012. She was also co-president of World Friendship Forum, a transitional and welcoming group for International and American women who are new to Manhattan.

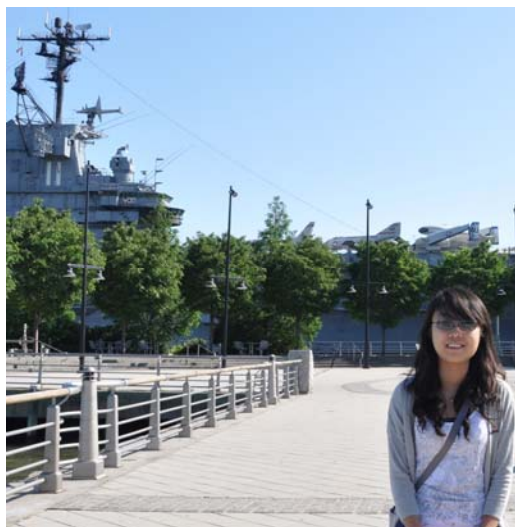
Indu says that “Matha Pitha Guru Deivamâ” is a very popular adage in India and it literally translates as Mother, Father, Teacher and God. She was taught in childhood that parents and teachers are the living Gods visible to naked eyes, with whom you can interact. She has dedicated her learning and success to her teachers and family especially her grandmother, parents and husband. She says, “My grandmother inspired me with her patience and kindness, my parents with their hard work, honesty and moral strength and my husband with his calming presence, ever-loving support and a very nice sense of humor.” Indu feels very much at home here, and claims that K-State has a pleasing environment with lots of nature, highly learned yet humble individuals and an excellent environment to work towards a higher goal.

She loves to meditate on the shores of the river and be with nature. She is also trying to learn more recipes to cook during her free time. Finally, she is a classical dancer in Bharatnatyam – an Indian classical dance form which she has practiced for 15 years.



**Indu and her husband Praveen in Chicago for St. Patrick's Day with the Chicago River in the background, dyed green.**

**Sijia Xiang**, who also goes by **Grace**, is a PhD student and graduate teaching assistant in the department. She's from Hangzhou, China, a city known of its natural beauty and tasty food. As the only child in her family, she feels blessed to enjoy the love from her parents and grandparents.



**Grace in front of the USS Intrepid, a decommissioned aircraft carrier, anchored in Manhattan Island, NY.**

She's been interested in logical thinking and playing with numbers since she was a youngster, and therefore, chose mathematics as her undergraduate major. While pursuing her bachelor's degree, she found herself increasingly interested in statistics, and consequently came to K-state to do graduate work in statistics.

The past year has been quite a productive year for her. Last summer, she worked with Nora Bello and a group of epidemiologists from the college of veterinary medicine on a paid interdisciplinary research internship, submitted an abstract and made an oral presentation at the Conference of Research Workers in Animal Diseases in Chicago last December, then presented her research at the 2012 Conference in Applied Statistics in Agriculture. Additionally she completed her work for her MS report under the direction of Dr. Weixin Yao, and defended the work. This year she moves on to full-time doctoral studies.

In her spare time, she enjoys travelling. She recently spent nearly 20 days on a vacation, with stops in Miami, Orlando, New York, and Washington D.C. She also enjoys participant sports, including badminton, volleyball, and swimming.



## Dr. Lynn Ying-Shiang Lin Graduate Research Assistant Scholarship

**Sean Meier** came by his interest in statistics via an extremely circuitous route. After not being very successful on his early tries at undergraduate studies, he enrolled in a community college. There he first studied to be an electrician, then a nurse. In the course of his nursing studies, he encountered a math professor who helped uncover his talent in the field and encouraged him toward further study. Finding math to be an area where he had both talent and interest, he went on to the pursuit of a four-year degree at Winona State University in Minnesota, where he was nudged toward statistics. After successfully completing his bachelor's degree, he came to K-State for graduate work.

Sean and his younger sister grew up in the town of Winona. He is now married to Tria, and is the father of daughters Linda (6) and Shayna (4). He had a teaching assistantship the past school year, but is moving into a consulting position in the Statistical Laboratory for the coming year. He is excited about that; he loves analyzing data and solving real-world problems.



Sean pictured with wife Tria

## Foundation Scholarship in Statistics

Lianqing Zheng is from Shijiazhuang, China. She has two brothers. After coming to the U.S. with her husband, she earned a master's degree in applied statistics from Western Michigan University. She has long been interested in calculating and interpreting numbers. She feels that statistical methods can let the numbers speak for themselves. A professor of hers once told her, "This is the beauty of statistics!" when he got excited about the statistical methods. After hearing that and learning about the many things statistics has taught her, she feels that she understands the meaning of that sentence more deeply and she is happy with her decision to pursue a career in such a beautiful field.

She and her family moved to Manhattan when her husband found a post-doctoral position at K-State. She decided to pursue a Ph.D. degree in statistics to not only feed her fascination with statistics but to also learn many more new things. She has found the Statistics Department at K-State to be very friendly; she says she has been welcomed like a family member. She is appreciative of all the faculty and indicates that she has been guided and given many opportunities to be a successful student.

She is now doing her doctoral research under the supervision of Dr. Gary Gadbury and also working with his collaborator Dr. Ruth Welti from the biology department. In her research project, she is doing data analysis on biological high-dimensional metabolomic data sets.

She has a number of hobbies that vary from watching different kinds of television programs ("Glee" and "America's Got Talent" are among her favorites) to playing basketball and tennis with her family. Her number one hobby, however, is gardening. She has gained insight and some experience in planting vegetables. Gardening has taught her the importance of not only enjoying the simple things in life but also the beauty of nature.



Lianqing is pictured with her daughter Emily at Disney's Hollywood Studio's in Orlando, Florida.

## K-State Dinner at JSM



It is a tradition to have a K-State get together at the annual Joint Statistical Meetings. We had a great time at Baire's Grill, an Argentine restaurant in Miami last year. More than 25 people with all kinds of KSU connections joined in; old acquaintances were renewed and new ones were made. The accompanying picture was taken there.

This year's meetings in San Diego will be no exception. The dinner will be held on Monday evening (that is July 30<sup>th</sup> this year) as usual. We will gather about 6:00 and eat around 6:30. Please check the message boards in the convention center for the specific details. There will be information and a sign-up sheet posted by Sunday morning, and you will have until mid-afternoon on Monday to sign up. We'd love to have you join us, no matter what your ties to K-State might be.



## New Faculty

The department is pleased to announce that two new faculty members will be joining us in August.

**Perla Reyes** comes to us from the University of California at Santa Cruz, where she has been working at a post-doctoral position under Dr. Abel Rodriguez in the Department of Applied Mathematics and Statistics. Prior to that, she earned her doctorate in 2010 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she worked under the direction of Jun Zhu, with whom she wrote a dissertation entitled "Selection of Spatial and Spatial-Temporal Linear Models for Lattice Data". Her current research interests include Bayesian Nonparametric Methods, Complex Networks, Model Selection, Spatial-Temporal Statistics, and Environmental, Business, and Econometric problems.

Perla grew up in Mexico City in a small (mom, step-dad, an older brother and one nephew) but very close-knit family. The others all continue to live in Mexico. Growing up, her family didn't have much money, so her mother worked full-time. Consequently Perla's grandmother lived with the family and took care of Perla and her brother while her mother was at work. Her grandmother passed away while Perla was an undergraduate, but Perla still thinks of her often.



**Perla (on the right) and her mother, practicing their favorite sport: shopping!**

Thanks to the public university system in Mexico, Perla obtained an excellent undergraduate education for free. After graduation, she worked for a market research company. Her love for statistics started in college, but became stronger analyzing consumer behavior. That job allowed her to save money for graduate school and to supplement her home income, so her mom was able to retire earlier.

Outside of work, she enjoys reading and watching TV; the first of these she attributes to her mother's bedtime stories; the second she blames on her beloved grandmother and her soap operas (a guilty pleasure that Perla shares). Perla also enjoys exercising; something she started in Madison.

She much prefers swimming or biking outdoors to gym or treadmill exercise. She also practices yoga and the newest addition to her slate of activities is wall climbing. Another California change is a move toward healthier (fresh, locally grown) food away from the typical grad student diet of microwave dinners. She finds it to be extra work in the kitchen, but worth the effort.

As was mentioned above, Perla is close to her family. She continues to love spending time with her brother; in fact, she claims she has picked up many of his tastes in music, sports, movies and books. He is pursuing a double major in math and computer science, and she describes the two of them as a pair of geeks. She also talks with her mother nearly every day. Without internet she would be paying seriously large phone bills. She says, "Thank you, Skype!"

**Chris Vahl** will be new to a faculty position, but certainly not new to many in the department. Chris earned his Ph.D. in the department in 2005 under the direction of George Milliken. Most recently he has been working at Elanco Animal Health, a subsidiary of Eli Lilly, but he is excited about his return to the academic world. His position will involve a significant consulting component, primarily with agricultural scientists, and the industry background will serve him well.

Chris is the second of three boys and was born in Cheyenne, Wyoming. At that time his father worked for Boeing as a missile mechanic installing Minuteman missiles at missile bases throughout the Great Plains. Besides Wyoming, they also lived in North and South Dakota, Missouri and the family settled in Kimball, Nebraska, when his older brother started school. He vividly recalls rooting for the Cornhuskers then -- a memory he's hoping will fade with time. Both his parents were originally from Montana, so the family moved back to Montana when Chris was 10. Since then, he's considered himself a Montanan.

Chris became interested in statistics when he was a math major at the University of Montana. David Patterson, a professor of mathematics there, pulled him out of an overcrowded class and made him take his math stat course instead. It really resonated with Chris because it was the first course he'd taken involving "mathematics with a purpose", a phrase he fully attributes to Jim Neill. Subsequent courses in sampling and design of experiments "set the hook". Outside of work, Chris likes taking the kids to the movies and the zoo, and when he can find the time, reading science fiction/fantasy novels. When he shouldn't have any time, he plays Angry Birds.

Chris indicates that he loves Manhattan and K-State and is excited about returning as a faculty member.



**Chris is pictured here with his family at Epcot Center. Qing Kang, his wife (also a Ph.D. graduate of the department), daughter Sydney (6) and son Ian**

## Alumni News

**Rebhi Bsharat** (PhD '07) has left the Midwest for Texas and a job (and promotion) with Alcon Labs in Fort Worth. They make medications for eye allergies, inflammations, dry eye, etc. Rebhi reports that an added benefit of the move was locating an excellent private school for his four daughters and a very nice community in Irving, Texas. His wife and daughters are all doing well; he says that life is simpler now that all four daughters are walking.

It has been a big year for **Chris Bilder** (PhD '00). While winning a share of the departmental basketball pool might be a big deal in some years, that pales in comparison to other events of this year. First, Chris and wife Kimberly welcomed their second son, Keegan, into the family on May 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year. And secondly, Chris was promoted to (full) Professor in the Department of Statistics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln during the academic year.

**Wendy Boberg Archer** (MS '04) indicates that her employer has been bought out, and now instead of being Buccaneer, a Vangent Company, she works for Buccaneer, a General Dynamics Company. Her day to day work remains unchanged with some disruptions as the companies integrate (resistance is futile, she indicates). She now has a household with a two year old and a 13 year old under the same roof, and is hoping the terrible twos won't be terrible and the teenage years won't be too dramatic (didn't she just say that resistance is futile?).

News from the household of **Duane Brown** (PhD '99) and **Yihfen Chen** (PhD '99) indicates that both are thriving in their personal careers. Duane works at the China Lake Naval Weapons Station and was recently named a NAVAIR Associate Fellow last year for his significant contributions to the work there. Basically, this means that management



feels that technically he's in the top 4 to 6% of 4.1's NAVAIR workforce nationwide. Yihfen won the 'Instructor of the Year' award at Cerro Coso Community College where she teaches most of the statistics

courses and all levels of mathematics from elementary algebra to differential equations for the Department of Mathematics. This is at least her fifth such award. In their spare time (??) they serve as chauffeurs to offspring Britney and Geoffrey.

**Mike Butine** (PhD '97) has changed jobs, but not home locations. There has been a slowdown in Seattle biotech these days, so Mike took a job where they allow him to remain living in Seattle area, but work onsite as needed. The company, BioMarin, is located in Novato, California (that's in Marin County, just south of Napa Valley), and develops drugs for rare diseases. Mike's title is Senior Scientific Director, Biostatistics. To him, that means he gets to do the fun stuff. BioMarin is planning on filing for a marketing approval within the next year, and he's been working to get things in order for that.

**Kevin Chartier** (PhD '97) and wife Lori are celebrating the birth of their first grandchild. Brayden Michael Chartier was born on May 28<sup>th</sup>, weighing 6 pounds, 9

ounces. He is the son of Jeremy and Katie.

**Nancy Chiou-Siepmann** (PhD '88) continues to work for Takeda Pharmaceuticals, but has received a significant promotion. She has moved from VP of Analytical Science (including Data Management, Statistics, Safety Statistics, Clinical Data Standards & Systems) in the United States to the head of the same function globally with staff from other regions reporting to her. Due to her the new responsibilities, she has engaged in extensive travels, including trips to London (3 times), Mumbai (twice), Osaka, Copenhagen, Zurich, Konstanz, Shanghai and Berlin all since the first of the year. (Don't you wish you had her frequent flyer miles?)



**Shannon** (MS '06) and **Nicole Dick** (MS'08) have made a big transition from the corporate life back to Kansas. Nicole has taken a faculty position teaching statistics and mathematics at Garden City Community College in Garden City, Kansas. She absolutely loves teaching and gets to work with a great group of faculty. Her online statistical crafts business (Nausicaa Distribution) continues to grow; they are amazed that there is so much demand for stuffed statistical distributions and such. Shannon has started his own statistical consulting business; it's called the Western Kansas Statistical Lab. To date, the experience has been interesting, educational, and sometimes it even generates some income. He has had a quite positive response for being in the area, but he has found that accompanied by a general lack of understanding about what a statistician actually does.



This has meant that he's had to focus on general education about the role of a statistician with the organizations he deals with. Slowly but surely he is being brought on board with projects at their start instead of trying to "fix things" after the fact. He finds it greatly rewarding when someone new contacts him based on a good reference from previous work. These are busy folks, with an active two year old daughter (Keegan) and another daughter on the way, expected to arrive in August.

**Regina Estes** (MS '90) and husband Drew undertook a project in their older home that she describes as 'rehabapalooza'; the task was to get rid of all the remaining knob & tube wiring. Didn't find any buried treasure in all their demo work, but did come across a mostly-full corked bottle of gin from circa 1917 that someone must have lamented mislaying. Along with all that electric work they gutted and are rehabbing a bathroom; a big job in a very old house. Gina still has family in Kansas and gets back regularly for graduations, birthdays and other special occasions.

**Santosh Ghimire** (MS'11), has been a doctoral student in mathematics at K-State since earning his statistics degree. This spring he defended his dissertation entitled "The Law of the Iterated Logarithm for Tail Sums". He also received the spring 2012 KSU Graduate Student Council Award for Graduate Student Teaching Excellence in the doctoral

## Alumni News Continued

category. He will begin work soon as a faculty member at Tribhuvan University in his native Nepal.

At the end of last year, **Don Gonzales** (MS '92) was honored for finishing his 25<sup>th</sup> year with Eli Lilly in Indianapolis. He was given a nice reception and a large plaque. Don and wife Jill watched their youngest (Jayme) graduate from high school this spring; she's headed to Purdue this fall, interested in mathematical types of things (statistics, actuarial science), etc. Don and Jill face the prospect of being empty-nesters at that point.



The Mayo Clinic has been a good employer for **Brandon Grossardt** (MS '03). His most recent perk was a trip to Sicily in November 2011 to help teach a Neuroepidemiology Methods course. It was his third time participating in the leadership of the course, which takes place in western Sicily on the top of a small mountain in the ancient city of Erice.

The last year has been a wild up-and-down year for **John Harder** (MS '92). In September, he lost his beloved wife of almost 29 years, Julie, after a long (11 years) battle with a variety of cancers. They were married in 1982 in Newton, KS, and had lived for the last 19 years in Windsor, Ontario (John works for Ford in Detroit). But in May, daughter Chani and son-in-law Alex brought forth John's first grandchild, a daughter named Julianne Elizabeth Wiens. John indicates that grandbabies provide great therapeutic power, and he is loving the experience of being a grandfather.

**Molly Hort Van Norden** (MS '08) and husband Vince (also a K-Stater) are still living in the Houston area and are expecting their first child – already known to be a boy – on July 11<sup>th</sup>. As any parent can attest, they are both excited and a bit overwhelmed at the prospect.

**Kim Howell** (MS '94), now in her 12<sup>th</sup> year at Microsoft in Seattle, and daughter Jaden took the trip of a lifetime recently. They visited Spain, Portugal, and the Canary Islands and had a wonderful time.

**Marietta** (PhD '71) and **Norberto Ison** (PhD '70) have both retired from the University of California at Berkeley. Norberto had been teaching Statistics and assisting in the computer services of two campuses of the University of the Philippines as a volunteer since 2008. They had visited those campuses a semester at a time every year for three years. They are now enjoying their three granddaughters in the San Francisco area. They have hopes of making a visit back to the K-State campus in the near future.



**Adam Jarvis** (BS '02) is still at Sprint in Overland Park as a Senior Statistical Consultant (he started there in July, 2010). The big news for the family is that wife Jamie and Adam are expecting their second child and first daughter around June 22. Her name will be Caylee Kathleen Jarvis. Their almost-3 year old son, Colby, is very excited

for the arrival of his baby sister.

**Chuck Kincaid** (MS '87) serves as the Engagement Director for the Business Intelligence and Analytics Practice of Experis Corporation. He's been there since 1999 (in different roles) when it was called Trilogy Consulting. Engagement Director means that he enables others to do statistics and build statistical applications for clients all across the country. He works out of the company's Kalamazoo Center of Excellence. His professional interests include analytics talent, analytics infrastructure, education and visualization. In terms of personal issues, he lives nearby in Battle Creek, Michigan. His wife Barb (of 26 years) is Director of Faith Formation at St. Joseph Parish. Their oldest son, Andrew, is getting married in August, and finishing up his degree in Airplane Maintenance Technology. Daughter Allison is studying Nursing at St. Mary's in South Bend, IN. Son Matthew is a freshman in HS and working on his Boy Scout Eagle Project.

**Beth Larrabee** (MS '11) reports that she is off to a flying start in her work at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. Her primary work responsibilities are in the Vaccine Research Group and with Interlymph, the International Consortium for Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

**Chris Malone** (PhD '02) and his colleagues at Winona State University in Minnesota hosted the First Annual Midwest Undergraduate Data Analytics Competition (MUDAC.org). This competition brought together over 50 undergraduate students from several institutions across the Midwest. Teams of students used their data analysis and communication skills to solve a problem for Fastenal, the competition's corporate sponsor. Winona State plans to host this event again in April 2013. Chris is also involved in the grading of the Advanced Placement Exam in Statistics, which takes place annually in June.

**Clem Maurath** (MS '67) is now living in Woodstock, Illinois. He grew up in Oakley, Kansas and attended Fort Hays State after spending 3 years in the Army in Germany 1959-1962. He worked at several pharmaceutical companies, retired twice from Abbott Labs and Pfizer. Clem is still doing consulting for local pharmaceutical companies after passing the 75 year old mark in May.

**Wijith Munasinghe** (PhD '10) has been promoted to Senior Research Statistician at Abbott Labs in the Chicago area. He is also pleased that one of the interns picked for this summer's experience is Mohammed Sahtout, a graduate student in the department. Wijith and wife Chamila are proud to announce the birth of daughter Pawani, their second child; she arrived on May 30<sup>th</sup>. She joins older sister Iruni (6) in the household.

**Peter Njuho** (PhD '95) has finished a three year employment contract with the Human Sciences Research Council of Republic of South Africa. He is now looking for another employer and hopes to find one soon. His family is doing exceptionally well. First son Edwin has finished his schooling and is now working for an accounting firm. Younger

## Alumni News Continued

son, Matthew, who accompanied Peter during his sabbatical year in Manhattan, is now in his second year of medical school at University of Cape Town. So Peter and wife Esther are discovering what it is like to be empty nesters.

**Subashan Perera** (PhD '01) continues to work hard in the Division of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. Chasing funding for medical research is a part of what he does, and he finds it getting harder and harder every year. On the family agenda for Subashan, wife Janitha, and children Kolitha (8) and Siddath (4) for this coming summer is a vacation to the Smoky Mountains, Mammoth Cave, and Virginia Beach.

**Lisa Petty Morrow** (MS '90) took a layoff package from Hewlett Packard in 2005, which included a schooling package for a Graduate Certificate in Accounting. She has since been using her accounting knowledge in the family automotive repair business, located in Elmira, Oregon. Her main job, though, is homeschooling their extremely active 6 year-old son, who learns very differently from Mom (which makes the job challenging as well as fun).

After 13 years in the hustle and bustle of the pharmaceutical industry in North Carolina, **JoAnn Plachecki Thompson** (MS '92) made the decision to stay at home with daughter Mary-Katherine. Husband Ryan (a statistician and NC State grad) and close friend **Kathleen Kiernan** (MS '93) – known affectionately as 'Aunt Bubba' to Mary-Katherine - have been supportive of her decision.

**Mollie Pehlman Roediger** (MS '03) writes that life is going well in Minneapolis. She is still working for the University of Minnesota. Her big project of late was raising over \$5000 for the Minnesota AIDS Project this past year. She invites K-State grads to join her and her family for the 4th Annual Bacon Day on September 22<sup>nd</sup> of this year; a day of food, fun and music where folks celebrate all things bacon. She, husband Trevor (a Manhattan native), and son Waylon will all participate.

**Rhonda Ragual** (MS '88) has now been at Experis in Kalamazoo for 5 years, where one of her colleagues is Chuck Kincaid (see above). She and husband Josh Naranjo (a faculty member in Statistics at Western Michigan University) are anxiously watching their kids grow up. Rhonda was in the back seat for son Jacob's (16) practical driving test and describes it as "terrifying". Daughter Julia (12) loves math and soccer. (Maybe we have another statistician on our hands??)

**Marta Remmenga** (PhD '91) continues her work for the APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) Center in Fort Collins, Colorado. She reports that her family is growing up quickly, with oldest daughter Kate having graduated from high school this spring.

In September of last year, **Shawn Rouen** (MS '05) was promoted to Lead Statistician at H&R Block in Kansas

City. He spends the majority of his time overseeing the statistical models Block builds and analyzing tests for the media and field marketing departments. The other (maybe even bigger) news is that in April, Shawn and girlfriend Deanna became engaged. They are planning a small destination wedding in Manitou Springs, Colorado near Pike's Peak in June 2013, and are considering a honeymoon in Napa Valley, CA as both are wine lovers.



**V.A. (Sam) Samaranayake** (PhD '83), a long-time faculty member in statistics at Missouri University of Science and Technology (formerly University of Missouri-Rolla) received funding of more than \$189,000 from the Missouri Department of Higher Education to conduct a professional development workshop for middle school teachers. This is the second year of a three-year project. He has been receiving funding for such workshops every year (except once) since 1996. These workshops originated with the Quantitative Literacy workshop program developed by the ASA many years ago. Wife **Yolanda Juico** (PhD '85) is completing her 20th year working as a statistician at Brewer Science Inc., a company located in Rolla that specializes in chemicals for the microelectronic industry. They report that their youngest son will graduate from college this June.

**Beth Schreiber** (MS '94) works in the budget office of a (very well-known) federal agency in DC. While the Hatch Act limits what she can say about politics, it is safe to say that she is tired of brinkmanship and posturing from all political parties and wishes our lawmakers would pass a balanced budget before the fiscal year starts. She's also on the steering committee for the DC SAS Users Group. If you would like to present something interesting you've done with SAS, check out [www.dc-sug.org](http://www.dc-sug.org) and let her know.

**Brian Sherfey** (PhD '95) is still working at the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (just outside of Ridgecrest, California) in the Reliability and Maintainability Engineering Branch. It has been two years since he moved into the group. The job requires some travel to such scenic hotspots as Patuxent River, MD; Tucson, AZ; and St. Louis, MO. He does cross paths with Duane Brown on occasion. Son Matthew will be a fifth grader in the fall. Travel plans include a couple of weeks with Brian's family in Colorado, plus weekend trips to Legoland and Catalina Island.



**Sharad Silwal** (MS '09) is finishing his doctorate in the Department of Mathematics at K-State this spring. He has accepted a tenure-track faculty position at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin starting this fall.

## Alumni News Continued

**Mark Sorell** (MS '88) has made a big move from the corporate world. After 23 years at Intel in the Albuquerque area, he has left to join his wife Traci in a consulting and training business. They balance that activity with the parenting of active two year-old Carlos.

**Lucas Taylor** (MS '02) had a very big year last year. First, he married Lauren Griffen on July 9<sup>th</sup>. Then he received a nice promotion just before Christmas when he was named Associate Director at Pfizer; the first MS level statistician to receive that title in anyone's memory.



The **Ron** (PhD '87) and Sherry **Wasserstein** family have been an international family during the past year. Ron's work has taken him to every continent except South America and Antarctica. As the ASA's Executive Director, he has been "promoting the practice and profession of statistics" (the ASA's tagline) all over the US and the world in the run up to the International Year of Statistics in 2013 and the 175th Anniversary of the ASA in 2014. Ron's family got to go with him to Ireland in the fall. Their daughters Grace

and Rose have spent most of the past year in China teaching English and learning Chinese. In other family news, their daughter Beth married Levi Burson last summer, and both are attending Wichita State University. The Wasserstein clan will grow by two within the next year, as two boys from Haiti will join the family.

**Kurt Zhang** (PhD '05) has been joined in Grand Forks North Dakota, by his wife, Linglin Xie, a graduate from K-State's Division of Biology. They were apart for two years while she was doing a post-doc at the University of Chicago. She is now a faculty member in Biochemistry at UND. Both work in the Medical School. They moved into their new house last summer. Kurt began teaching a bioinformatics course at UND this past spring. He describes it as an advanced graduate class with students from computer science, mathematics, biology, and pharmacology enrolled. He finds it to be an exciting undertaking with significant inter-departmental team work. As a side note, Kurt has resumed his interest in duplicate bridge play in the last year; he is playing weekly in a local ACBL club. Although the club is small, he finds the competition stimulating.

## Conference on Applied Statistics in Agriculture

The department hosted its 24<sup>th</sup> annual KSU Conference on Applied Statistics in Agriculture in late April and early May, with Dr. Rob Tempelman from Michigan State University serving as keynote speaker and workshop leader. His workshop was entitled "Applied Bayesian Inference for Agricultural Statisticians" and his keynote address to the conference was "Beyond the Generalized Linear Mixed Model: A Hierarchical Bayes Perspective".

In addition to Tempelman's presentations, the 2012 conference had its usual selection of contributed papers, posters, and social events. One special feature this year was an evening event at the Konza Prairie Biological Station, which sits just a few miles outside of Manhattan. This is a biological field station of 8600+ acres owned by Kansas State, through the assistance of the Nature Conservancy. This land has never been plowed and serves as a site for long-term ecological research, education, and prairie conservation. It is a unique outdoor laboratory that provides opportunities for the study of tallgrass prairie ecosystems and for basic biological research on a wide range of tax and processes.

Conference participants took some short to medium length hikes, shared an outdoor meal on the facility, then took short tours of the bison pastures (it was relatively late in the calving season, so there were a

number of young animals to see) and the grassland experimental areas.

Plans for next year's conference, the department's 25<sup>th</sup> annual, are already well underway. It was recently announced that the keynote speaker and workshop leader for the 2013 conference will be Kevin Wright from Pioneer Hi-Bred who has been a regular participant and leader at the conference for a number of years. Kevin will focus on the (intelligent) use of graphics, particularly in agricultural statistics.

An additional piece of news is that the conference will move next year, from the hotel where it has been since its inception (originally a Holiday Inn, most recently a Clarion Hotel) to new facilities in downtown Manhattan. The conference itself will be held in the new convention center, and the primary conference hotel will be the Hilton Garden Inn, which is attached to the convention center. The new location will also give easy walking access to Manhattan's brand new Flint Hills Discovery Center as well as numerous restaurants and the Town Center Mall.



Conference participants at the Konza Prairie Biological Station.

## Faculty Activities

Her second year in the department has been a busy and productive one for **Nora Bello**. While continuing with NIH and USDA funded research, Dr. Bello was very excited to receive an intramural award from K-State to support her work on livestock genetics, looking at statistical models for multiple trait genomic selection. This year, she attended the annual meetings of the Eastern North American Region of the International Biometrical Society in Washington DC in April and the Joint Annual Meetings of the American Dairy Science Association/ American Society of Animal Science in Phoenix in July, in addition to our own Ag Stat conference. Her professional development has been further enhanced by participating in a number of short state-of-the-art courses on high performance computing, as well as new statistical methods for genome-enabled selection and for next generation sequencing data analysis. During this past year, Dr. Bello also gave invited talks on her interdisciplinary research at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Missouri-Columbia and University of Florida-Gainesville, as well as at the Annual Meeting of the Dairy Cattle Reproduction Council in Kansas City. Most recently, Dr. Bello, with the participation and support of faculty and graduate students, has spearheaded a journal club that meets regularly and provides a venue for interaction and discussion of current research. As a final piece of good news, just before this newsletter went to print, Nora received word that she had a very important invited review paper accepted for publication in the *Journal of Dairy Science*, which is the top international journal in dairy-related topics all the way from farm to jug. Furthermore, it got accepted in record time! Nora is the first author in this paper, entitled: "Milk Production and Reproductive Performance: Modern Interdisciplinary Insights into an Enduring Axiom".



**John Boyer** is retiring as of July 7<sup>th</sup> this year, as detailed in another story in this issue. He was quite active this past year in a variety of venues, including serving on the K-State Faculty Senate through the end of his three-year term (which expired in May), and working as a member of the ASA's Development Committee. He continues to do a good bit of the planning for the department's annual Conference on Applied Statistics. He serves as the Administrative Advisor to the NCCC-170 (Statistical Advances in Agriculture) group, which meets annually. He attended that group's meeting last summer at Purdue University. He also made it to the Joint Statistics Meetings in Miami, and will go to the 2012 meetings in San Diego in July/August. He claims to have attended every JSM since the last one held in San Diego, and that was 1978, so this will be his 35<sup>th</sup> in a row.

John's biggest plans on the horizon include participating in the ASA's annual international trip, jointly organized by

the People to People organization. This year the statistics delegation is going to spend 8 days in September in Russia (mostly Moscow and St. Petersburg), and will focus its discussions with our Russian counterparts on applied statistics programs in general and agricultural statistics as one of the specific topics. John plans to attend and take wife Lora along; neither has ever been to Russia.

**Kun Chen** attended the Junior Researcher Workshop and gave a talk at the 2012 ENAR Spring Meeting, Washington, DC. The talk was about the extensions and generalizations of his joint work with his collaborators in high-dimensional modeling recently published in the *Journal of Royal Statistical Society, Series B*. During the spring term, he gave an invited seminar talk about his research in dimension reduction to K-State's Department of Mathematics. Additionally, he gave a talk about his most recent work in matrix regularization at the Frontiers in Biostatistical Methods Symposium, Kansas City, KS, in May. This summer, he will give an invited talk at the 2012 ICSA Applied Statistics Symposium in Boston.

In the last year, he has worked on several grant proposals submitted to NSF/NIH. A poster presentation with his collaborators about their preliminary cancer research findings was well received at the Multiscale Modeling Consortium Meeting held in Rockville, Maryland. His efforts were well-supported by the department as well as the college, and he was awarded \$10,000 funding through the Faculty Enhancement Program. Along with Drs. Gadbury and Wang, Kun proposed a new graduate level course for the department entitled "High Dimensional Data and Statistical Learning". He is very excited about developing and offering this course for the first time in the coming fall semester, and his goal is to better prepare our graduate students for the era of big data.

Kun and his wife Tingting had a wonderful trip to China in May 2012. After having been legally married for almost two years, they finally held their formal wedding ceremony in front of their family and friends in China, twice (!!). (Their hometowns are nearly 2000 miles apart.)



**Juan Du** has had a very busy year. In addition to publishing several papers, she gave invited talks at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the AMS Spring Central Section Meeting in Lawrence, Kansas, and a contributed talk at the 2011 Joint Statistical Meetings in Miami. She also received a \$10,000 award for a proposal to K-State's College of Arts & Sciences Faculty Enhancement Program, for a project entitled Spatio-temporal Modeling and Prediction of Kansas Weather Data and Crop Yields. In addition, she developed a brand new Ph.D. level course for the department's curriculum; Statistical Methods for Spatial Data. Since March of 2011 she has been serving as Secretary/

## Faculty Activities Continued

Treasurer of the Kansas Western-Missouri Chapter of the American Statistical Association (March 2011- present).

**Suzanne Dubnicka** attended last year's JSM in Miami and she has continued work on the Noether Awards Committee, an activity on behalf of ASA's Section on Nonparametric Statistics; in fact she has just started serving a second three-year term. She continues to get her collaborative work published. In the fall, she will take



over as the department's undergraduate advisor. On the agenda for this summer is a short vacation to Michigan to participate in the "Girls on the Run" 5 kilometer road race with her nieces. This fits in well with other parts of her life, as she has begun training for her first triathlon.

Even 19 years after his official retirement, **Arlin Feyerherm** continues to do statistical work. He still provides annual reports to wheat breeders and specialists in a nine-state area. He has finished analyzing another set of wheat yields from varietal trials, to updating means and standard errors to point toward top yielders in a given environment. Reports compare varieties based on their yields, relative to checks, in performance trials using the DYA (differential yielding ability) method.

**Gary Gadbury's** biggest news is probably his promotion to Professor by the university. The department extends its congratulations to him for all his hard work. Gary presented at the 2011 JSM and was a coauthor on 5 other talks/poster presentations last year. He was coauthor on a talk and a poster at the 2012 Ag Stat conference, and a coauthor on two talks at the 2012 ENAR meetings in Washington DC. He was on the invited program at the Interface Conference in Houston, May 2012, and attended a conference on Next Generation Sequencing Data at Iowa State also in May, 2012. He had 2 co-authored papers appear in print in 2011 and another accepted by The American Statistician. A former student, Robert Poulson (PhD May 2011), is the lead author on the latter. He directed the research of another PhD student, Dilan Paranagama (PhD Dec 2011) who is now employed at BioStat Solutions.

He continues work on funded grant projects with biology, kinesiology, and the Nanoscale Corporation. He also continues as an Associate Editor for the Annals of Applied Statistics. Gary and his wife Carol are planning a road trip to San Diego in August for the JSM.

**Jim Higgins** is also retiring from the department this summer. There is more about his career in the retirement story, found elsewhere in this issue.

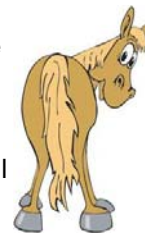
Jim and wife Mary Lou attended the JSM in Miami in August of last year. One of his big thrills was seeing son Michael (a PhD candidate in statistics at UC-Berkeley) present a paper at the meetings.

**Abby Jager** continues to make major contributions to the department's teaching efforts and those contributions were recognized this spring when she was one of a small number of faculty in the College of Arts & Sciences recognized with a William Stamey award, the college's highest recognition for teaching quality. She has been especially active in the undergraduate offerings in the department, and particularly to the distance education versions of those courses. This past year she was supervising the distance version of Statistics 325, and simultaneously developing a version of Statistics 350 (the first semester of the business statistics sequence) which will go on line this coming spring. When finished with that, she will rework the distance version of the Statistics 351 course.

Family matters are important to Abby. She has made three trips in the last year to Annapolis, Maryland, where her younger sister Leah (also a Ph.D. statistician, employed as a faculty member at the Naval Academy) lives. Abby really enjoys Annapolis, and will make another trip there this summer to see a new-born nephew. Over the last winter break she took a trip to a traditional family destination – St. George Island, just off the coast of Florida, where her whole family gathers over the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Although he's retired **Dallas Johnson** is certainly anything but inactive. He continues to teach distance education courses for the department, and attends most seminars. He is doing some outside consulting, but always finding time for the important people in his life. At this point, his grandsons sit pretty high on that list.

Horses and horseback riding continue to be high priorities for **Ken Kemp** in his retirement. Ken and wife Genny will make their usual escape to the mountains of Colorado near the end of July to escape the heat and bugs for a couple of weeks. They will be with their son and his wife in the Colorado Springs area for the first week and then spend a week with friends who have a 400 acre ranch just north of Buena Vista, between the Buffalo Peak mountains and the Collegiate Peaks which include several fourteeners and Colorado's tallest mountain, Mt Elbert. They will be riding Ken's Missouri Foxtrotters and enjoying the breathtaking views, low humidity, the absence of biting bugs, and temperatures in the 80s (and hopefully there will be no forest fires nearby).



Other things going on for Ken this summer include training and selling some horses. He has three in various stages of training and he wants to have them all well enough trained to be ready to go down the road to new owners by September. He is looking to reduce his herd size from eight to five.

Although he's nominally fully retired, **George Milliken** is still quite active. Among other activities, he attended the ASA's Conference on Statistical Practice (held in Orlando



## Faculty Activities Continued

in February). At that conference he presented a day-long workshop entitled Analysis of Messy Data: Designs Needing a Mixed Model Analysis.

**Leigh Murray** is extremely busy with a very heavy consulting load on top of her teaching duties. In addition to the many folks she works with at K-State, she made 5 trips back to New Mexico State University to work with long time colleagues in Weed Science and Nematology. She's worked with them on various projects either individually or in collaborative projects since 1984. They were co-presenters with her at the 2011 Ag Stat Conference. The projects involve examining the interrelationship between two bad weed species (yellow and purple nutsedge) and a bad plant parasitic nematode (southern root knot nematode). It's been a really good group to work with, both faculty and the two technicians, as well as numerous graduate students and undergraduates.

With her duties in the K-State's Statistical Consulting lab, she was oversee this year for GRA's Zhining Ou and Carlie Shannon plus 10 students from the Statistical Consulting course in Fall 2011 and 15(!) in the spring 2012; between them they worked on nearly 100 consulting projects. Highlights from the Spring included studies on: effect of planting date and hybrid on grain sorghum yield; evaluating the effect of mungbean intercropped with rice mixtures in young rubber tree plantations; glycemic index in sorghum products; durable superpave asphalt mixtures in Kansas; two studies on calf castration methods; antioxidant levels in wheat plants exposed to stressors; swine growth curve modeling; dollar spot and brown patch in grass on golf course fairways and greens; evaluation of use of reclaimed asphalt; testing sensory panelists; meloxicam stocker-calf study; treatment design for an oil-water-starch emulsion study; enhancement of cysteine in yogurt; greenhouse gas emissions in cattle feedlots.

As is her tradition, Leigh will spend about a month this summer at the cabin that she and husband Dave Smith have on beautiful Flathead Lake in Montana. Sitting on the deck, drinking wine, and watching the hummingbirds makes for a situation she finds to be pretty close to perfect for recharging academic batteries. Add the new granddaughter (and her parents), some dogs, and some beautiful views and I think we'd all like to be there.

**Jim Neill** traveled to the JSM in Miami last summer and also attended this year's Conference on Applied Statistics in Agriculture. Jim and John Boyer co-wrote a chapter on the history of the department for a book to be published in 2012 entitled "Strength in Numbers: The Rising of Academic Statistics Departments in the U.S.". This book will contain a chapter on each of the academic departments in the U.S. that have been in existence for 45 or more years. He will attend this year's JSM in San Diego, where he will represent the department at the meeting/workshop of the academic representatives.

Phased retirement has apparently been good to **Paul Nelson**; he seems to have enjoyed his first year in the program. This summer he and wife, Bonnie, will be taking a tour of Italy. They'll fly into Rome, and spend most of the time in Florence and other parts of Tuscany.



**Peter Perng** and wife Jong-I continue to live in Irvine, California, and report that they enjoy the life they have there in southern California. They regularly make it back to Kansas, and expect to do so again this year to visit son William and his family in Wichita.

The big news for **Weixing Song** is that he has come through the university's tenure and promotion process very successfully. He is now Associate Professor, with tenure. The department extends its warmest congratulations to him for his efforts.

Weixing published 5 papers in a variety of outlets last year, and gave an invited talk in the 2012 AMS Spring Central Section Meeting in March. He also received invitations to give talks at two international conferences (one in China, one in Greece). He will attend the 2012 JSM in San Diego. He continues to serve as an associate editor for the Journal of Statistics and Probability Letters. This past year he has served as the department's graduate program director, and in the coming year he will serve as co-director.

**Haiyan Wang** gave two invited talks this past year, one in a special session on Mathematical Statistics at a sectional meeting of the AMS held in Lawrence, KS, and the other a seminar for the Department of Statistics at Texas A&M University. She was also one of 17 new members elected to membership in the International Statistical Institute. In the fall of 2012, she will be on sabbatical leave from her departmental duties, planning to spend part of her time in College Station, TX and part of it in Manhattan, finishing up several as-yet-unfinished manuscripts/projects.

**Weixin Yao** attended the JSM in Miami last summer, where he gave a talk on Clustering and Machine Learning in a topic contributed session. He will give an invited talk on "Mixture of Regression Models with Varying Mixing Proportions: A Semiparametric Approach" at the 2nd Institute of Mathematical Statistics Asia Pacific Rim Meeting in Tsukuba, Japan in July, 2012. He has also had publications in both the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society and the Journal of the American Statistical Association recently. He was recently elected to the post of Vice President for the Kansas-Western Missouri Chapter of the American Statistical Association and served as editor for the Proceedings of the KSU Conference on Applied Statistics in Agriculture.

## Supporting the Statistics Department with Your Gifts

*Note: the article below was written by Ron Iman of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Ron earned MS and PhD degrees from the department in 1970 and 1973, respectively. He has had a long and distinguished professional career, working for most of his employed life as a member of the technical staff at Sandia Laboratories in Albuquerque. He has retired from Sandia and currently works as a private consultant. Among his many leadership roles in the profession, perhaps most prominent is the fact that he served as President of the American Statistical Association in 1994. Ron and his wife Rae (pictured here) have supported the department, the College of Arts and Sciences and the university financially as well.*

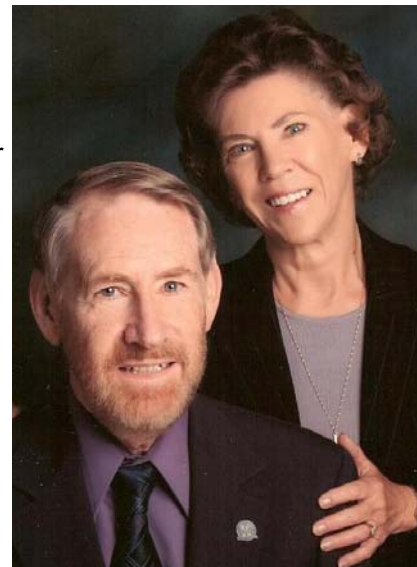
I always enjoy reading the department newsletter as it provides a great way to keep up with department news and follow the careers of alumni. I have been pleased to see the continued improvement in the quality of the publication (hats off to John Boyer and others). I was particularly pleased with the listing of donors in last year's issue, which continues to grow and motivated me to write this column.

If you are like me, having a degree(s) in statistics from K-State has had a major impact on your life and career. I know that I could not possibly have achieved the degree of success that I have enjoyed without my degrees in statistics. I'm sure that each of you has the same feeling of gratitude.

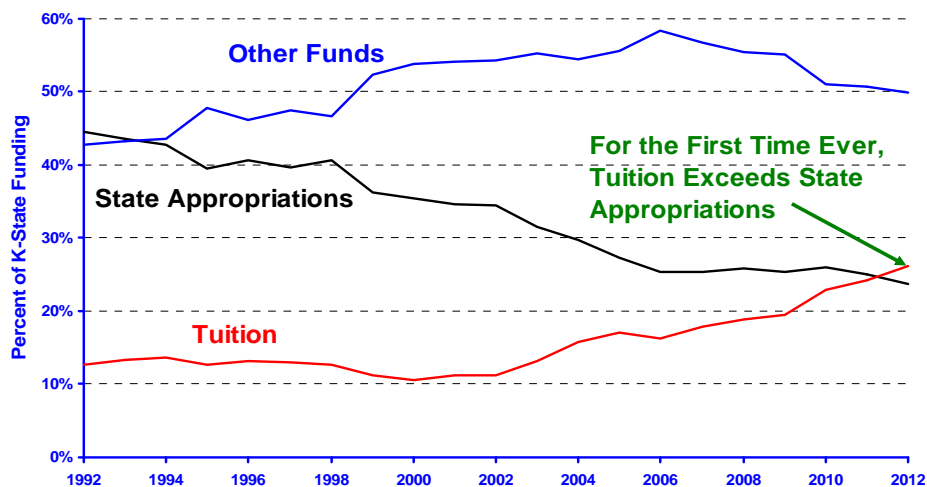
Rae and I have established strong ties with K-State and we make several trips to Manhattan each year for service on various boards. I hope that each of you avails yourself of opportunities to visit the campus. We have developed a strong sense to support K-State. That support is needed more than ever as the budgetary pressure continues to increase each year. The graph accompanying this article illustrates how the source of KSU funding has changed over the past 21 years. State appropriations have decreased from 44.6% of the funding in 1992 to only 23.8% this year. In the meantime, tuition has escalated from 12.7% to 26.2% over the same time period. As recently as 2002, tuition was only 11.1%! This year we have witnessed, for the first time ever, the percentage of KSU funding from tuition exceeding that from State appropriations. The State share is projected to continue decreasing – some project as low as 10%. Tuition cannot continue to increase to make up the deficit.

The only alternative is for an increase in “other funds” in the graph, which means that the alumni and friends of the Statistics Department need to be called on to see if we can make significant gifts to the department. Rae and I have made giving to K-State a priority with much of that directed to the department. We have been fortunate to endow a scholarship in statistics, which is now used to provide support for two students. We enjoy meeting these students for breakfast on one of our trips to Manhattan. It's amazing to hear their stories and how much the financial support of the scholarships helps them with college expenses.

Donations can be sent directly to the Statistics Department, or you can contact Sheila Walker from the KSU Foundation, who is the development officer for the College and Arts and Sciences. She can be reached at: [sheilaw@found.ksu.edu](mailto:sheilaw@found.ksu.edu) or (785) 532-7511.



KSU Funding Trends 1992-2012



If you are not already doing so, I hope that you will consider becoming a yearly donor to the Statistics Department. We have found that giving appreciated stock is a good way to make a donation. As an example, suppose that you paid \$4000 for a stock that is now worth \$10,000. If you donate the appreciated stock directly to the KSU Foundation earmarked for the Statistics Department, the Department gets \$10,000, the government gets \$0 and assuming a 28% tax rate, you get a tax savings of  $28\% \times \$10,000 = \$2800$ , which makes your out-of-pocket expenses only  $\$4000 - \$2800 = \$1200$ . Not bad leverage!



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