Ever wondered what economists really love? More than anything and everything? Data! That’s right, data. Which is why I approached my former faculty and mentors at AREC with the idea to have them utilize what I possess and they covet: data. In this case, residential water consumption and price data. Wouldn’t it be interesting to know how residents of metro Phoenix respond to changing water prices, and how non-price factors affect their residential water demand? Clearly I think so, and as it turns out so do Doctors Thompson, Megdal, and Aradhya.

As a financial analyst for Arizona-American Water, Arizona’s largest investor owned water utility, I prepare and support rate increase applications and file them with the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC), the regulatory body that sets consumer prices for most Arizona utilities. In recent years, the ACC has become more aggressive in its goal of encouraging water conservation through pricing incentives. Accomplishing this has meant changing water customer rate structures to “increasing block” structures, where initial units of consumption cost the least per unit, and ultimate units cost the most. The conservation idea inherent in this model is intuitive: as a customer uses more units of water they face higher marginal prices for their next unit of consumption thus creating an incentive to restrict usage and thereby conserve water. Increasing block water pricing structures are not uniform across the water utility industry, but they typically involve 3 to 5 blocks of us-

Continued on page 7.
**Graduate Doings**

**Forster Okoli** (M.S. 2004) and his wife welcomed their first son, Chigozie, on December 5, 2009. Forster is in his sixth year as a research associate/data analyst for the Arizona State Department of Education.

**Bob Needham** (M.S. 2005) reports that he recently began working as a regional economist with the Army Corps of Engineers in Galveston, Texas. He and his wife, Joan, have a son Caiden, born in 2009.

**Andrea Borlizzi** (M.S. 2009) works at the Istituto Nazionale di Economia Agraria in Rome. He writes, “Even though this year was good from a job perspective, in fact, Italy is such a difficult country! Everything requires either a thousand permissions or more complicated things, so we are also considering the possibility to relocate ourselves somewhere else.” In the meantime, he and Jehsel celebrated their wedding anniversary and the winter holidays in her hometown of Culiacán, Mexico.

**Haoying Wang** (M.S. 2010) is in the Ph.D. program at Penn State. He reports that he “miss[es] the close circle formed among AREC students at Arizona.” Haoying says that the Ph.D. program is pretty small with a lot of attention from faculty. He has been working in urban economics (residential development in the Phoenix metro area) and in operation research (diffusion process and brand introduction dynamics) but not very much in econometrics.

**Li Zhu** (M.S. 2007) writes to say that he’s leaving HSBC Card and Retail Services in Las Vegas and moving to Chicago for a new job with Discover Financial Services. He notes the position will still be in risk, but in the area of portfolio management instead of collections (which he has been doing). He also flew off to China last September during the World Expo. “The scale of the Expo was way beyond my expectation. It was a once-in-a-life experience.”

**Daniel Sellen** (M.S. 1989) is now stationed in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, but as of mid-January was actually staying in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. He continues his work as a sector leader in agriculture and rural development with the World Bank. He is a contributor to some of the World Bank’s blogs as seen in this recent post ([http://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/benin-under-water](http://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/benin-under-water)).

**Sonam Gupta** (M.S. 2003, Ph.D. 2009) married Abhishek Sharma in Jaipur, India on February 9th. Sonam is an assistant professor in the Food and Resource Economics Department at the University of Florida.

Lots of news from **Ibrahima Wane** (M.S. 2003). “I left three months ago my BD Risk Management team in Phoenix to join the RVS team in Beaverton (seven miles west of Portland [Oregon]). I am still with Wells Fargo Bank but just decided to take on a better and higher position. Obviously, it comes with new challenges. This is a switch from the Small Business Credit Card division to the mortgage side. Part of my responsibility is to conduct bi-monthly AVM (Automated Valuation Method) testing. It consists of evaluating AVM performance and constructing AVM usage tables that optimize in efficiency/cost and also meet each Line of Business (LOB) risk tolerance level (accuracy threshold). The AVM is an alternative and fast tool in assessing mortgage pricing. My team assist Wells Fargo Home Mortgage & Wells Fargo Financial in assessing the latest home valuation. I am still relatively new within the team and I am learning and enjoying the change in scenery as well. My team is open to...
Ibrahima also reports that he recently visited West Africa. "I visited family and friends in Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal in three weeks. I had a great time! Everyone was so nice and available. I brought a lot of gifts and gave some solid cash $$$$$ but it was with pleasure (so many people in need...). The infrastructure has dramatically improved in all three countries but poverty is all over [the] place. So many challenges to overcome. If you and the rest of the AREC team have some good ideas on how to tackle poverty, please let me hear them."

Anna Rita Germani (M.S. 2000) visited April 2010 with Professor Dennis Cory and his wife, Marie, during their stay in Italy. Anna Rita and her husband, Claudio, have a daughter Sofia. "Sofia is already seven years old...time flies so fast! Can you believe that ten years have passed since Claudio and I left Tucson in December 2000?"

Lana Jones (M.S. 2008) lives in Mammoth, Arizona, a small town of not many more than 2,000 people. "It is nice to be closer to the land, and the trees and birds and lizards. Having been here almost two years now I’m beginning to see Mammoth’s downsides more clearly though. I imagine they’re pretty similar to most small towns with very little employment for most people. That I have two local jobs amazes me sometimes.” Lana works as both a reporter for the San Manuel Miner newspaper and a clerk for Mammoth Public Library. She’s also continued to collaborate with Professor Bonnie Colby and she maintains a blog about life in the country, The Happy Hovel (http://thehappyhovel.blogspot.com/).

Haimanti Bhattacharya (M.S. 2003, Ph.D. 2007) notes that "[w]ith the tenure clock ticking through my third year at Utah and fourth year for Subhasish, it is definitely a crucial time for us."

We are managing our Canadian, U.S. and India commutes pretty well so far and hope we can find a way out to reduce the intra-North American commute in the future." She is on the Economics department faculty at the University of Utah while he is in a similar position at the University of Calgary.

Matt Mealy (M.S. 2010) has taken a position with KPMG in Washington, DC. “Things in DC are going well. I am currently working extensively with Melissa Burns [M.S. 2005] doing model reviews and validations. We basically go to different banks and review their current modeling methodology and make sure it is accurate and up to par with industry standards. The traveling is fun but tiresome. The work is very interesting, especially since I am seeing a lot of the things I learned (probability of default, loss given default, probit, logit models) from a business perspective. DC itself is a very interesting place. I am still getting used to not being able to wear shorts and flip flops outside, those have been replaced by jackets, scarves, and gloves. The number of tourists here is incredible, it is amazing how populated this city is and yet hardly anyone refers to it as ‘home.’ All of the landmarks and museums sure are a sight to see. It is a lot of fun to take our visiting friends and family out to hang out on the mall, see the Jefferson, Lincoln, and Washington memorials. I hope to make it back out to Arizona in April and if so I will be stop-

Anna Rita Germani with husband Claudio in the Dolomite Mountains near Bolzano, Italy.

Anna Rita with daughter Sofy.

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Hao Lu (M.S. 2009) reports from Cornell University where he is in the Ph.D. program that he has passed the qualifying exam and that he is being funded as a teaching assistant. He was also able to swing a trip back home to Beijing during the winter break.

Current M.S. student Fatima Luna had a baby girl, Metzli Sol, on November 26, 2010. Little Metzli and family to Washington, DC, where Arif has a new position as senior monitoring and evaluation specialist at TOPS (Technical and Operational Performance Support), a new USAID/Food for Peace-funded program. TOPS is designed to build the capacity of NGOs and UN organizations implementing food security projects. TOPS fosters collaboration, innovation, and knowledge sharing of food security and nutrition best practices. Prior to the cross-country move, Arif was a specialist in development economics for TANGO. “Workwise, my current job is not very different compared to what I was doing in TANGO, but it is more challenging and interesting as well. Opportunity-wise, this is a great place to be. … [T]here is a high demand for people with quantitative skills to work in the field of monitoring and evaluation.” Still, Arif laments, all family members are “finding it challenging to cope with the weather and adjust to the high-paced lifestyle.” Daughters Mashaba and Arusha “are encouraging us to return to Tucson. So you know we are missing Tucson a lot.”

Quatie Jorgensen (M.S. 2009) writes from that she has started a new manager’s job with the Oklahoma Agricultural Cooperative Council. She says she will “travel to three different co-ops in Oklahoma and spend four months at each one. I will be learning every aspect of the co-op, grain elevators, and fertilizer, as well as managing one.”

Kimberly Bourne Chan (M.S. 2007) writes that her son “Marcus is doing really well. He is 16 months old and full of energy. Every day is a new adventure. Right now, he is getting four new teeth in, so its been pretty challenging. I just started a blog with videos and pictures. There’s not much on it but check it out: http://www.gowiththeflowmom.blogspot.com/.”

Katie Pittenger (M.S. 2006), currently in the Ph.D. program at UC Davis, tells us that her athletic endeavors have shifted recently. “I haven’t done a triathlon in quite a while. I too have abandoned swimming. I am still running a lot (and biking some), though my pace is pretty slow these days as I am six months pregnant! My husband and I are super excited, and although I was initially a bit stressed about the thought of trying to finish my dissertation with a little one around, I think we are going to be able to manage it. My dissertation work is based on primary data from Ghana… a randomized maternal and early childhood nutrition trial… and, as you know, the data collection process can be quite slow, es-
Amalie and Mia, daughters of Ingrid Ardjosoediro

Anoop Gopakumar Nair (M.S. 2007) reports that he has a new job in Indianapolis with JPMorgan Chase. He says the move will work out well since his wife is just finishing her studies in electrical engineering.

Ingrid Ardjosoediro (M.S. 2003) is living in Washington, DC, and has two daughters, Mia (6) and Amelie (4). She writes: “I have changed positions (from DAI) as of last year (July 2010) and have accepted an agricultural economist position with the FAS in the office of Global Policy Analysis Division. My portfolio includes the regions of Asia and Africa and I focus on renewable bio-energy issues. ... Working for the USDA is certainly an adjustment, but the topic I am working on is very interesting and I am surrounded by a wonderful group of commodity experts.”

Heather Waters (M.S. 2007) has started a new job as a relationship analyst with RABO Agrifinance’s Phoenix office. She is married to Dr. Firas Marayati, a nephrologist with the Southwest Kidney Institute.

Soon-to-graduate-with-his-M.S. Ibrahim Sall has been accepted into the Ph.D. program in Arid Lands here at the University of Arizona. Similarly, Jorge Lara Álvarez will be headed off for Ph.D. studies at Oxford University.

Interesting news comes to us from Niratcha (Grace) Tungtisanont (M.S. 2010) in Thailand. She was recently named first runner-up in the Miss Thailand 2011 beauty pageant. This win carries the title Miss Thailand-Earth 2011. Niratcha will now represent Thailand in the upcoming Miss Earth/World contest. Niratcha still has plans to do her Ph.D. and has been admitted to a number of schools in the United States.

Last July 31, Romilee Bool (M.S. 2008) and Kyle Emerick (M.S. 2007) were married in the Philippines near where Em grew up. Take a look at the fabulous wedding video the couple has online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snl_yvzcmSVg.

Kyle is currently finishing his second year in the Ph.D. program at U.C. Berkeley. At the Western Extension Committee meeting in January, AREC’s Trent Tregerstrom presented Bob Ebel (M.S. 2009) with an Outstanding Young Professional Award for his use of “new media” in Cooperative Extension education programs.

Two current AREC graduate students, Todd Gaston and Kevin Ray, have been selected to receive Water Sustainability Program (WSP) Graduate Fellowship awards. Todd is finishing as a WSP fellow while Kevin will take up his fellowship this coming year.

Undergrad Alums

Jamie Rovey (B.S. 2003) and wife Kattlyn welcomed new baby girl Cait into the world in December 2010.

Steve Kenagy (B.S. 1986) has recently moved back with his family to California after an interlude in Nashville.

Lisa McPhee (B.S. 2007) continues with her job in California for the Metropolitan Water Authority of Southern California.

We’ve also heard from Chris Tucker (B.S. EWRE 2008) in Chicago. He writes that he is in his second year of grad school in the environmental management and sustainability program at the Illinois Institute of Technology Stuart School of Business. He is also employed by IIT Stuart “working on developing a strategic management model for Cook County with a focus on energy efficiency and conservation, and sustainable economic development.”

Chelsea Schlittenhart (B.S. expected 2011) is AREC’s outstanding senior this semester. Her next academic move is to law school in the fall.

Amanda Leister (B.S. 2005) was awarded her Ph.D. in agricultural economics from Purdue University in December 2010. Her M.S. is from Texas A&M University. Amanda is at ERS in the Market and Trade Economics Division. She writes that her job “employs econometric and computable general equilibrium modeling techniques to investigate the economic implications of international trade policy, focusing specifically on the Doha Development Round negotiations of the World Trade Organization.”
My four weeks in Italy, studying applied econometrics at the Centro per la Formazione in Economia e Politica dello Sviluppo Rurale, was one of the most memorable trips of my lifetime. While days were spent attending classes and interacting with fellow graduate students from the EU, evenings were spent immersing oneself in the heart-warming hospitality of my Italian landlady and her family. Despite language barriers, I was impressed by the perseverance of my Italian counterparts towards understanding the nuances of econometrics. It was also interesting to view the European perspective on agriculture and food safety concerns during a three-day conference held by the European Union. Moreover, I found that the STATA training provided in conjunction with the lectures was crucial for my future studies as a doctoral student. The beautiful Italian coastline, delicious coffee and pizza, compounded by the fervor surrounding the Soccer World Cup 2010 were merely icing on the cake. I am very grateful to Dr. Gary Thompson and the Centro for providing this unique opportunity to graduate students in our department.

—Bhagyam Chandrasekharan

We were lucky enough to study in Italy during the World Cup. You couldn’t find a soul on the street (or at work unfortunately) during Italy’s games. While they weren’t champions like 2006, it was still a great experience (and probably safer for us that they didn’t win). Our days consisted of taking the train to the university and sharing the company of students from diverse backgrounds in Dr. Thompson’s microeconometrics class. It seemed like Italian law dictated multiple espresso breaks throughout the day, which no one complained about. Lunches were the peak of each day, as we frequented the world famous Neapolitan pizzerias.

The program was gracious enough to invite us to the beautiful Island of Capri for a seminar on sustainability in the food chain. We attended presentations from experts across the European Union. We also took some time to explore the island, even battling jellyfish to swim into the famed Blue Grotto. Our flexible schedule allowed us other travels, as we enjoyed the Greek ruins in Sicily, sightseeing in Rome, and strolling the canals in Venice. Our accommodation outside of Naples, however, was the highlight of the trip. The three of us stayed with an Italian woman, who unofficially adopted us, declaring immediately upon our arrival that we call her “Mamma.” She taught us Italian customs and, of course, how to make the perfect pasta sauce. Her daughters brought us into their circle of friends, showing us the nightlife and best kept secrets hidden from tourists. Our rooms looked over the Tyrrhenian Sea and black sand beaches from the infamous Vesuvius eruption were only a short walk away. Overall, we couldn’t have asked for a better trip or a more authentic experience in one of the most unique places on earth.

—Pete Burns

Bhagyam Chandrasekharan (M.S. 2011) is engaged to marry Durgaprasad Radhakrishnan on June 12. The main festivities and ceremonies will take place in Chennai, India, with another reception the following week in New Dehli. Congratulations, Bhagyam!
Undergrad Alum Spotlight: Patricia Grant

I am an Arizona native who was raised a Wildcat fan. I graduated from the University of Arizona in May of 2005 with a bachelor’s degree in agricultural economics and management with the business option. While at the University of Arizona, I was a CALS Ambassador, Sigma Alpha member, and a student worker for the AREC department and Dr. Bonnie Colby.

Prior to graduation I didn’t know exactly what I wanted to do with my degree, but I did know that I wanted to stay in Arizona and in the agriculture industry. During one of my senior-level AREC courses, I learned of a summer internship with Farm Credit Services Southwest (FCSSW) in the Tempe office. I began the internship right after graduation in May 2005. As an intern, I was able to interact with all positions and see first-hand that a career with FCSSW was definitely something I was interested in. It allowed me to stay in Arizona, remain a part of the agriculture industry, and utilize my degree.

I was fortunate enough to be hired full time as a loan officer trainee for the Tempe Branch in July of that summer. In this position, I worked with the Credit Analyst Department learning how to spread and analyze financial information and underwrite loans. I was able to put all those hours of accounting, business, and financial management and economics to good use. I moved into a loan officer/portfolio manager position within the Tempe Branch in 2007, at which time I was given a portfolio of various-sized agricultural loans, including crop, dairy, and livestock, to manage. This position allowed me to get out of the office and interact more with our borrowers, in addition to underwriting loans. As a portfolio manager, I was also responsible for marketing for new business.

I am currently an assistant vice president/portfolio manager in the Special Assets Department, working closely with impaired loans that have deteriorated for various reasons, often the economic downturn. I am responsible for developing and implementing strategies for impaired loans including restructuring, monitoring, and when necessary, collection. I am still utilizing skills obtained through my degree; I often think about Dr. Wilson’s AREC 450 course when I am completing a least-cost analysis on one of my accounts.

Even though it has landed me living in the middle of “Devil” territory, FCSSW was the right career path for me; I enjoy knowing that I am apart of an association that is helping to keep agriculture alive.

Bear Down!

Trisha Grant

Lisa McPhee continued from p. 1.

Miles H. Kiger continued from p. 1.
New Arrivals

There are some new faces around the Department these days. Amanda Vescovo came to AREC last fall as our new Undergraduate Coordinator and has had an unending stream of undergrad majors flowing into her office. Amanda is a UA alum (B.A. 1998, sociology) and also has an M.Ed. from National University in San Diego. She was a teacher before she came to us. Amanda is married and has three small children including twins.

Paula Schachter has also joined us as our new business manager. She has many years’ experience as an office manager and part-owner of an aerospace R&D firm. Paula and her husband (a music professor) are recent transplants from Pennsylvania, moving to Tucson “because we fell in love with the Sonoran Desert and wanted to be able to enjoy it while we are still young and able.” Paula is also involved with animals and wildlife. She volunteers at an animal rescue facility, and at the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum she can be found in the Interpretive Animal Center doing “really glamorous stuff like cleaning animal pens and hand feeding kestrels.”

Departures

Heather Jepsen, who was our undergraduate coordinator, has moved to a new position in the Department of Computer Science. AREC research associate Rosalind Bark (Ph.D. 2006 Arid Lands, water resource economics) has joined CSIRO (Commonwealth Science and Industrial Research Organization) in Adelaide, Australia. Rosalind is a resource economist in the Water for a Healthy Country program. She notes that the program is highly interdisciplinary, with contributions by resource economists as well as social scientists, hydrologists, and climatologists.

Friends of AREC

Rafiq Fals has been promoted to vice president at JP Morgan Chase in Phoenix. College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Dean Eugene Sander is retiring after 24 years.

Grad Students Field Team Again

Continuing on from the 2009–2010 academic year, the AREC intramural sports team had another “season” playing basketball in fall 2010. Pete Burns tells us that “Despite our 0-3 record, we played hard and had fun. Jacob was especially disappointed in this picture, as we had just lost our last game to the Law School team by 3 points.” A disappointment certainly, but there’s always next season!

Visitors to the Department

Steve Kenagy (B.S. 1986 in agronomy with a concentration in agribusiness) dropped by in November to chat with Paul Wilson. Steve was in the process of relocating to southern California. Steve reminisces, “After graduation, I worked with Dr. Wilson on a few case studies, which he is still using today. Amazing. That was a fun project. I have very fond memories of my 3 years at the UA. A wonderful time of working hard and having fun. I miss those days of going to class, working, studying and socializing. What a great place to go to college. I financed much of my college tuition (which is I am sure next to impossible today!). I spent quite a bit of time in the Ag Econ dept. working in the computer lab and taking as many of those courses that I could. Should have majored in ag econ as I loved the subject.”

Steve spent 19 years working in commercial banking in California before switching to a commercial real estate brokerage in Nashville. He, his wife, and their three daughters are anxious to get back to California although they love Tennessee. Steve says, “[I’m] looking forward to the challenge of banking as it has changed a lot in the last five years, but I know the So Cal market and the people I work with so the transition should be manageable.”

Also visiting the Department were Patricia Grant (B.S. 2005) and Lisa McPhee (B.S. 2007). Trisha, who came through in February to talk with Paul Wilson’s AREC 450 (financial management) class, is an assistant vice president/portfolio manager with the Tempe office of Farm Credit Services Southwest. Lisa paid a visit in March. She is with the Metropolitan Water Authority of Southern California and a few years ago was named a “Water Leader in the Class of 2009.”

In April, Matt Mealy (M.S. 2010) swung through briefly on his way to a wedding while Heather Waters (M.S. 2007) came by the next day to lecture to Paul Wilson’s Finance Management class about her job with RABO Bank.
Recent Books from AREC Faculty and Alumni


Readings in Production and Consumption Economics: Collected Papers of B.R. Beattie and Friends by Bruce R. Beattie. Published by the Department, 100 pages, 2011. This volume is available in print or for download. For details, please visit the publications section of the Departmental website.

Sharon Megdal Honored

C.W. and Modene Neely Endowed Professor for Excellence in Agriculture and Life Science, AREC professor and director of the Water Resources Research Center Sharon Megdal was named 2010 Leader of the Year in her capacity as a member of the Central Arizona Project board of directors. The award, presented by Arizona Capital Times, was in the government category. Congratulations!

Easy, New Way to Give to the Department

In these times of endless budget cuts and withdrawal of state support, AREC is pleased to announce that you can now support the Department directly through online donations. When you visit the Department homepage (http://ag.arizona.edu/arec/), you’ll see a new “Donate” button on the left side of the horizontal navigation bar. This leads directly to the online donation page. Your gift can be made in three different areas: the Graduate Enrichment Fund, the Undergraduate Enrichment Fund, and the Partnering Pathway Extension Fund. Donations to these funds allow the Department to make immediate use of the monies. Your gift is highly appreciated!