

A Penn State Mont Alto Student Publication

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Faculty Profile: George Siehl



CHRIS WILLMAN-BUNGE have much knowledge about what goes on there." Even though the Global Positioning Satellite system allows us to get from place to place, it cannot give information about human resources, and the study of the cultural and human

layout of the globe: that is what Geography is about," says Professor George Siehl, Instructor for Geography at Mont Alto. Siehl first came to the PSMA campus as a freshman in 1954, and spent a year in the school's forestry program before transferring to Indiana State Teachers College (now Indiana University). After graduating he taught high school freshman before taking a job with the National Parks Association. Siehl wrote magazine articles and even worked as a Congressional Researcher for the Library of Congress before returning to Mont Alto.

Prof. Siehl reports that one way Geography classes might impact students is by helping to "send educated people into the world as citizens." Geographic literacy may also present job opportunities on graduation. Such opportunities are found in marketing, business, cartography, and many other areas.

GPS affects both student and staff knowledge of geography. "Before [GPS], people used to really know the states and capitals of various parts of the country," Prof. Siehl says. "The new

technology increases awareness, but you don't know what goes on there." Even though the Global Positioning Satellite system allows us to get from place to place, it cannot give information about human resources, and the study of the cultural and human

For those interested, Prof. Siehl has current, and possible future, courses to fit one's schedule. His classes are GEOG30, which deals with environmental geography and how it relates to the global community ecologically, and GEOG 40, which covers world regional geography and the political, cultural, and geographical aspects of regions across the globe. Siehl says the campus is "hoping to expand and have a Geographic Information System course available to help those starting careers in cartography."

Geography is not widely taught in secondary schools and colleges, and as a result students have limited exposure to geography, and may have little knowledge or appreciation for the subject. "They know about doctors and lawyers and people like that," says Siehl, "but not much about geographers." For more information, he recommends visiting the Penn State Geography site, at geog.psu.edu. It is "an address, and a department, that can open the world for any good student."

Geography is all around us, and as Professor Siehl notes, "Everything in life you can talk about, you can relate to Geography."

Zipcar Comes to PSMA

MICHAEL GARRETT

New this year to Penn State Mont Alto are two Zipcars, a silver Honda Civic and Nissan Sentra, now sitting in the front row of the commuter parking lot. These are provided by the Zipcar Company, and are available to students to rent and use by the hour.

Founded in 2000, the award-winning Zipcar Company follows the model of European car sharing and, according to their website, "envision a future where car-sharing members outnumber car owners in major cities around the globe."

Though their primary focus is in major cities and urban areas, Zipcar also does work with many universities across the country, such as Ivy-League universities Yale, Stanford, and Brown.

Mont Alto is the first, and so far only, Penn State campus to work with Zipcar. The campus chancellor, Dr. Gnage, describes the decision to bring Zipcars to campus as an extension of efforts providing students with more transportation options. "Since I've been here, students have expressed concerns about transportation," he says. "Over the years we've been able to add additional trips to the bus and train station in Harrisburg. We added additional van trips almost every Friday going to Wal-Mart and Target, but it's never enough."

When the idea of Zipcars was first presented to the Academic Council near the beginning of 2010, it was immediately put into consideration. "We spent time on the campus to decide if this was something we should look into further or something we should drop," says the Chancellor. "Obviously, we decided

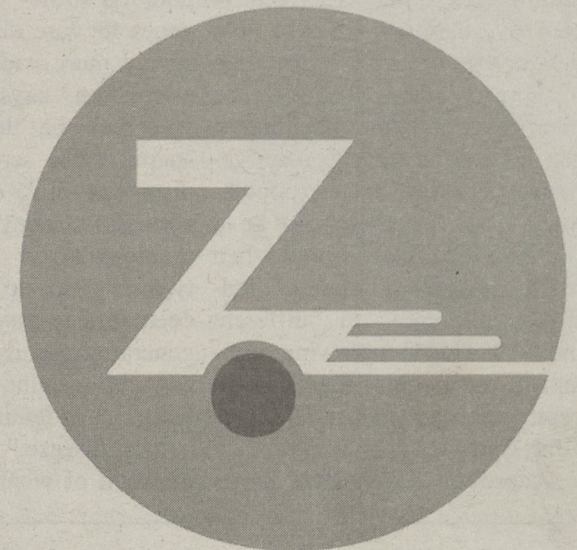
that it was something we should not drop, and we looked into it further."

Now the campus has signed a three-year contract with the Zipcar Company, and the cars are available for student use. "We officially launched at the Involvement Fair on August 31st," says

Kristen Fry, the campus director of public relations and marketing. "At that event, many students expressed interest in applying for a Zipcard."

To use a Zipcar, the first step is to apply online for a Zipcard, which unlocks the car, at www.zipcar.com/psuma. To be eligible for a Zipcard, one must be at least 18 years old and have had their driver's license a full year. Once a student applies, Zipcar runs a driving record check, after which the student will receive their Zipcard in the mail. There is an annual fee of \$35, though anyone who signs up receives also \$35 of free driving in their first month. After that, one can reserve a car online for \$8 per hour, with gas and insurance already included.

"Zipcar serves our needs well given that we are one of only a handful of campuses with on-campus housing," says Kristen Fry. "The opportunity to borrow a Zipcar at a reasonable rate on the hour allows our students more freedom and flexibility to get where they want to go." "I think it's great," says freshman Josephine Igwe. "It's convenient for students who don't have



cars. [I'd use them] to go to the mall, or to a restaurant for an hour or two." Dr. Gnage also suggested the idea of a group of students splitting the cost for a weekend trip. "I could see four students who live in the same town getting together to rent a car and pooling their money. Now it's pretty reasonable," he said.

The administration was optimistic, yet unsure of what sort of student response to expect. "We did not have a particular number," says Dr. Gnage. "Innovations like this take a while to take off, and for people to realize we have them." Kristen Fry, who ran the Zipcar table at August's Involvement Fair, says the student response so far has been good. "The program is too new to evaluate usage," she says, "but feedback from students has only been positive."

