

**AAG Newsletter**  
of the  
**Association of American  
Geographers**

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USPS 987-380 ISSN 0275-3995

The AAG Newsletter ISSN 0275-3995 is published monthly with July/August combined, by the Association of American Geographers, 1710 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009-3198. The cost of an annual subscription is \$25.00. The subscription price is included in the annual dues of the Association. Not available to non-members. Periodicals postage paid in Washington, DC. All news items and letters, including job listings, should be sent to the Editor at the address below or to newsletter@aag.org.

All Newsletter materials must arrive at the Association office by the 1st of the month preceding the month of the publication. This includes job listings. Material will be published on a space available basis and at the discretion of the editorial staff.

When your address changes, please notify the Association office immediately. Six weeks notice is necessary to ensure uninterrupted delivery of AAG publications. To assist the AAG office in your address change, include the address label with your change of address.

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## Help Geographers in Need

**Donate (tax-exempt) to AAG programs to assist Students, Unemployed Geographers, and Developing Regions Members**

**M**any geographers are experiencing financial hardship today, as hard times continue to rattle the US and other countries around the world. These geographers need our help, and the AAG has instituted and expanded many programs during the past decade focused on the needs of those who have the least.

I would like to make a special appeal this year to our membership and those friends beyond the discipline as well, to consider making a tax-exempt donation to support the AAG's multiple on-going efforts to try to make participation in the AAG affordable to those who are experiencing financial hardship.

These AAG initiatives, which provide special support for students, retired geographers, unemployed and underemployed geographers, developing regions members, and others in need, are briefly described below, and additional information on ways to support the AAG is available on the AAG website. To make a tax-exempt donation to the AAG program of your choice, use the form on page 21 of this *Newsletter*, or you can make a contribution quickly and easily online at [www.aag.org/donate](http://www.aag.org/donate).

Building a strong, active, and caring AAG can help us all get through these tough times and to emerge from them even stronger. It can help geography to continue its recent growth in importance and relevance, both within the university and in society. It can enable us to position our discipline strategically, so that when the economy recovers, geography will be at the forefront of that recovery. And it can help us be an inclusive association in which all geographers can participate.

Donating to the AAG now will also support the continuation of the many important initiatives we have undertaken, and ensure our ability to move geography forward on a dozen varied frontiers. It will provide a means for us as a discipline to continue

to enhance diversity, provide support for departments, strengthen scholarship, help attract top students, engage public policy, advance research, and develop new opportunities facing geography in both society and in the university.

### Recent Progress and Long-term Needs

The past decade has been an outstanding one for geography and the AAG. This decade marked major steps forward at the AAG in establishing a solid financial and organizational foundation needed to meet the challenges our discipline faces in the future.

Financially, the AAG formally retired all its debt in 2004 and recently established a new Endowment for Geography's Future to ensure the long-term stability of the organization, and to support opportunities for future generations of geographers.

As I noted in this report two years ago, our annual meetings also have grown in attendance and international influence. There is something for everyone at these open, inclusive, and dynamic meetings—which is just the way it should be in a discipline as rich and diverse as ours. Work has been completed on the new computerized online membership management systems and the online meeting registration and abstract submission system infrastructures at the AAG, and new applications and benefits of these online system infrastructures are now being realized across the board, from our publications to international outreach activities. Substantial cost savings and new efficiencies have also been achieved with these management systems.

Recent years also saw significant increase and reorientation of our educational and outreach efforts, through the expansion of the "My Community, Our Earth – Geographic Learning for Sustainable Development" program, through continued support for and participation in



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a wide range of specialty conferences and international exchange activities, and via the AAG's innovative Center for Global Geography Education program and an array of new NSF and Department of Education funded projects and proposals, increasingly focused on higher education and graduate programs in geography, as well as on K-12 education.

An AAG Office of Public Policy has been established, which means that geography now has eyes, ears and a voice on Capitol Hill and within the federal agencies whose policies can so directly impact our future. The building and training of a new AAG core staff with the professional and technical skills necessary for the 21st century has also progressed well, and internal work flows continue to be carefully analyzed and defined to increase efficiency and to enhance continuity of operations as normal staff turnover occurs in the future. I am also very pleased to report that our programs to increase AAG membership have produced record membership in our association of nearly 11,000 individual members in 2011.

But we cannot be satisfied with reflection on the successes of the past decade

alone. We require plans and resolutions about the future as well. With your support, what might these resolutions be? As a new year approaches, here are a few of my suggested resolutions:

1. Let's do more to continue to strengthen our Association's membership, financial foundations, annual meetings, and publications, and let's all work to together to improve these core programs at every opportunity.
2. Let's find new ways to support geography's academic programs and to expand its outreach to society, to other disciplines, to policy makers, and to engage the larger intellectual enterprise of which we are an integral and essential part. Let's continue to represent the needs and interests of geographers from all corners of our diverse discipline. Efforts are already underway for programs to support physical geography and for exploring ways to foster a growing synergy between geography and the humanities. Bolstering geographic science and interdisciplinary geographic research programs at NIH, NSF, USGS,

AAAS, and other leading science institutions will be a continuing priority, as will nurturing to success our many new AAG initiatives generated by the Diversity Task Force, the Senior Associates program, the Healthy Departments Workshops, our public policy activities, and many others. Remembering to appreciate the hard work of our excellent staff at the AAG, and thanking our members for the wonderful opportunity to work with you all, however, will be at the top of my own list.

### Supporting Those in Need

This column reiterates and updates the points I made two years ago in "Supporting Geography in Hard Times." Now, two years later, the US and the world are still in a deep recession, and the key message of that column is even more salient today. We need to remember that even during these tight economic times in the US, Canada, and Europe there are many around the world whose hardship vastly surpasses our own. The AAG has taken leadership roles in a

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number of important efforts to recognize and act on these needs of others, in ways that are relevant to what geography has to offer. These programs rely on your support, both financial and otherwise, to thrive and succeed. I'd like to mention briefly three such AAG efforts, which I think are particularly worthy of our support.

#### *AAG Developing Regions Membership Program*

This recent initiative not only benefits those geographers from developing regions who wish to participate, but it also benefits our current membership. Greater international networking, information sharing, and interaction is becoming increasingly common—and necessary—in the work and lives of most geographers, both in so called “developing regions” and in wealthier countries. As both the AAG membership and the attendance at our annual meetings have grown in recent years, international geographers’ participation in the activities of the AAG has grown at an even faster rate than that of domestic U.S.-based geographers. With over 7,000 attendees already registered for the upcoming AAG Annual Meeting to be held in New York City, over 30% are from countries other than the U.S., up from approximately 15% several years ago. Of course, supporting greater participation of geographers from the “developing regions” of the world in activities and networks of the AAG also enriches the experience, research, and scholarship of the AAG and its current members in myriad ways, providing both personal and professional benefits to us far exceeding the financial subsidies we extend to our colleagues in some of the poorest regions of the world through this program.

#### *Geography and Human Rights*

The AAG has played a leading role with the AAAS and a team of other scientific and professional associations to help develop the conceptual and organizational framework for a new international Science and Human Rights Coalition, hosted by AAAS. The AAG has been very active in making this Coalition a reality, and I have served as founding chair of its Steering Committee. The new Science and Human Rights Coalition, with a membership already of nearly fifty scientific associations ranging from physics to anthropology, works to promote

human rights awareness and programs within scientific associations, and works together with human rights organizations to address human rights needs around the world. As part of our work on human rights, the AAG also has developed specific “Geography and Human Rights” resources, including a bibliography of research on geography and human rights issues, an updated ethics statement, many sessions on these topics at our annual meetings, and the new AAG Geography and Human Rights Clearinghouse website ([www.aag.org](http://www.aag.org)).

#### *Support for Students, Retired, Unemployed, and Underemployed Geographers.*

The AAG maintains multiple programs which support those in financial need to become and remain an AAG member and to participate in its many activities, including the AAG Annual Meeting. The AAG's expanded Student Volunteer and related programs have enabled thousands of students attend our Annual Meetings for no or only a nominal registration fee. Retired geographers are honored for their years of service to the discipline with very steeply reduced AAG Annual Meeting and membership fees. The AAG also has continued to expand its programs to support unemployed or underemployed geographers in many ways, including a recently revised highly progressive fee schedule which further reduces membership fees for lower income geographers, and special programs which subsidize Annual Meeting fees for unemployed, low-income, underemployed, and disabled geographers.

#### **Keeping AAG Costs Low**

The AAG has worked very hard to be cost-efficient in its activities and programs, and to keep costs as low as possible for AAG members. The AAG membership fees also are based on a highly progressive sliding scale related to income, to support early career faculty as well as unemployed or underemployed members. Both AAG membership and AAG annual meeting registration fees are a bargain compared to most other geography organizations. Additionally, the AAG has not increased either its membership fees or annual meeting registration fees during the past several years, in recognition of difficult economic times, despite substantial rising

costs of doing business during that same time period.

We also have greatly expanded AAG funds to subsidize student travel and attendance at AAG meetings, special programs for retired members, and new programs to help members in special financial need. Your donations to the AAG help maintain and expand these services and programs during tight financial times.

#### **Honoring AAG Donors**

Your donations are crucial to the AAG's ability maintain so many programs to help geographers in need and to grow the discipline. The AAG recognizes and honors the financial contributions of its members for their continued support of the essential AAG programs that help advance our discipline.

Both new donors and donors who have previously made contributions in the amount of \$1,500 or more are eligible to name a commemorative brick, which will be placed in the new walkway of Meridian Place (AAG headquarters) in Washington, D.C. Proceeds go to the AAG fund of your choice; contributions are tax deductible.

Some suggestions for naming bricks in support of geography are your name and organization, or the name of a professor, colleague, or mentor you wish to honor. Personalized bricks express your support of geography, and also make a unique and lasting retirement or honorary gift for colleagues. They can also be a way to remember and memorialize someone important in your life or career who has passed away. Buying one of these symbolic bricks is a great way to make your mark at Meridian Place as you to help create new ways to advance geography. Opportunities for making a tax-deductible donation to the AAG this year are described on the page which follows this column.

Additional information on specialized gifts or on bequests, or on other funds available for support at the AAG, please visit [www.aag.org](http://www.aag.org), or feel free to contact me directly at 202-234-1450. Thank you for your past support of geography, and of the AAG, in so many ways. Let's join together now, in these difficult times, to help support those geographers who are most in need. ■

Doug Richardson  
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## AAG ADVANCING GEOGRAPHY FUNDS

I (we) pledge to contribute \_\_\_\_\_ to the Association of American Geographers as part of the Advancing Geography Campaign.

Giving levels include:

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 to \$999       | Scholars Circle   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 to \$4,999   | Millennium Circle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 to \$9,999   | Century Circle    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 to \$24,999 | Explorers Circle  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000 and above   | Leadership Circle |

This gift will be made as follows:

Total amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Plus annual payments of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If you intend to fulfill your pledge through a gift other than cash, check, or marketable securities, please check:

- credit card       bequest       other

Credit Card:       Visa       MasterCard

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

- My (our) gift will be matched by my employer

I would like my gift to go toward:

- Endowment for Geography's Future  
 Developing Regions Membership Fund  
 AAG Student Travel Fund  
 AAG Geography & Human Rights Fund  
 AAG Unemployed and Underemployed Geographers Fund  
 Marble Fund for Geographic Science  
 AAG Public Policy Initiatives  
 Enhancing Diversity Fund  
 Area of Greatest Need  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this pledge form to:

AAG Advancing Geography Fund  
 1710 Sixteenth St. NW, Washington, DC 20009

## New Appointments

Binghamton University, Richard R. Shaker, Visiting Assistant Professor. PhD 2011, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Binghamton University, Jay L. Newberry, Assistant Professor of Geography. PhD 2011, Michigan State University.

Montclair State University, Pamkaj Lal, Assistant Professor. PhD 2011, University of Florida.

Montclair State University, Clement Alo, Assistant Professor. PhD 2009, University of Connecticut.

South Dakota State University, Assistant Professor, Trisha Jackson. PhD 2011, University of Kansas.

State University of New York, Cortland, Assistant Professor, Richard Hunter, PhD 2009, Louisiana State University.

University of Alabama, Professor and Chair, Douglas J. Sherman. PhD 1983, University of Toronto.

## VGSP Accepting Applications for 2011-12

The Visiting Geographical Scientist Program (VGSP) is accepting applications for the 2011-12 academic year. VGSP sponsors visits by prominent geographers to small departments or institutions that do not have the resources to bring in well-known speakers. Participating institutions select and make arrangements with the visiting geographer. Applications and program details may be found at [www.aag.org/org/education/aag/edu\\_visitinggeoscientist.cfm](http://www.aag.org/org/education/aag/edu_visitinggeoscientist.cfm). A list of pre-approved speakers is also available. Please make sure to include a brief cover letter with your application that describes the schedule of events or activities being planned.

VGSP is funded by Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU), the international honors society for geographers ([www.gammathetaupsilon.org](http://www.gammathetaupsilon.org)). Additional funding is available for applications involving Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges, Hispanic-Serving Institutions and other Minority-Serving Institutions through a grant from the National Science Foundation as an aspect of AAG's ALIGNED Project (Addressing Locally-tailored Information Infrastructure & Geoscience Needs for Enhancing Diversity). Questions may be directed to [jketchum@aag.org](mailto:jketchum@aag.org).

## Support Geography with a Tax-Deductible Gift

End-of-the-year tax-exempt donations to the AAG may be made online at [www.aag.org/donate](http://www.aag.org/donate). All charitable contributions made to the AAG by December 31, 2011 are tax-deductible for the year 2011. Gifts to the AAG may be designated to support specific projects and initiatives.