The AAG will be continuing a decade long arc of sustained activity around the theme of “Geography and the Humanities” with a special set of sessions on these interactions during its upcoming Annual Meeting in Seattle. We invite all interested geographers and humanities scholars to attend and participate in these sessions, to be held on April 12-16, 2011.

As noted previously in this column,1 there has been a remarkable resurgence of intellectual interplay between geography and the humanities in both academic and public circles. Metaphors and concepts of geography now permeate literature, philosophy, the arts, and other humanities. Terminology and concepts such as space, place, landscape, mapping, and geography are increasingly pervasive as conceptual frameworks and core metaphors in recent publications in the humanities.

The diffusion of ideas between geography and the humanities is significant for the insights and connections it has spawned. Scholars and writers outside of the field of geography have developed new understandings from interrogating a sense of place, or by examining the changing landscapes of globalization and complex new international realities in traditionally geographic terms. Old and new geographic techniques and ideas applied to humanities studies have opened new lines of intellectual inquiry and have changed research methodologies in numerous fields. And, of course, the mutually beneficial interactions between the discipline of geography and such humanities fields as the philosophy of science, cultural and ethnic studies, and various literatures in post-modernist thought have also had far-reaching implications for geographic research and education.

For many years, the AAG has focused on developing ideas, methods and partnerships through which we might further explore, showcase, and foster the emerging interactions between geography and the humanities. These efforts resulted in a seminal Symposium on Geography and the Humanities, sponsored jointly by the AAG, the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the University of Virginia, in 2007. This symposium explored how geography informs the humanities and vice versa, took stock of the new and evolving connections between geography and the humanities, and identified promising new research pathways along which such interaction can proliferate and be strengthened in the future.

These Geography and Humanities interactions are now the subject of two new books, emanating in part from the AAG Symposium, and supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. The first of these complementary explorations, Envisioning Landscapes, Making Worlds: Geography and the Humanities, focuses a lens on the deep traditions of the humanities within the discipline of geography, with contributions from many of the most prominent authors in the humanities traditions of geography. The second book, Geohumanities: Art, History, Text at the Edge of Place, reaches outward to explore the new, rapidly evolving experimental and experiential engagements by humanities disciplines themselves as they seek to understand and incorporate geographic methods and concepts of space and place into their own work. Both of these new books, forthcoming from Routledge in Spring 2011, will be the subject of featured discussions by attendees of the AAG Annual Meeting’s special “Geography and the Humanities Sessions” in Seattle, together with the books’ editors and authors.

Another highlight of the Geography and the Humanities track at the Seattle meeting for me will be a keynote presentation by

Continued on page 4
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as the AAG’s 2011 Honorary Geographer,

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the exquisite writer and long-time friend

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Barry Lopez’s keynote talk will be pre-

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see the Call for Papers at right if you are

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AAG Members Elected to American Academy of Arts and Sciences

AG members Donald Meinig and Ruth DeFries were recently inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS), one of the oldest and most prestigious institutions in the United States. Current AAAS membership includes more than 250 Nobel laureates and 60 Pulitzer Prize winners. The induction ceremony took place on October 9, 2010.

Don Meinig is Maxwell Research Professor of Geography Emeritus at Syracuse University and author of the ambitious four-volume work, The Shaping of America. A historical and cultural geographer, he has made substantial contributions to the study of landscapes and regions and topics such as imperialism and globalization. His clear prose and sweeping geographical perspective have enlivened geography over the course of his 60-year career in academia.

Meinig's influence on the discipline of geography is incalculable, partly through the seminal work The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes (1979), which he edited and to which he contributed several essays, partly through his influence on generations of students. In 1991 he was the first American-born geographer to be elected a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy. He has received numerous honors and awards throughout his career, including the Charles P. Daly Medal by the American Geographical Society and the Master Teacher Award of the National Council on Geographic Education.

Ruth DeFries is Denning Professor of Sustainable Development at Columbia University. Her innovative research examines human transformation of the landscape and its consequences for climate, biogeochemical cycling, biodiversity, and other ecosystem services that make our planet habitable. Over the past three years, DeFries has received a Fulbright award, been elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences, and in September 2007 received the MacArthur “genius” fellowship—one of the most prestigious awards in the world.

DeFries is actively involved in linking scientific information into policy decisions. Her research analyzes land use changes over broad scales through the lens of satellite observations, with a particular focus on tropical deforestation and its impacts on atmospheric carbon emissions and conservation. She is often credited with transforming the way scientists analyze the impact of land cover change.

Established in 1780 by John Adams, James Bowdoin, John Hancock and other founders of the nation, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences undertakes studies of complex and emerging problems. Its membership of scholars and practitioners from many disciplines and professions gives it a unique capacity to conduct a wide range of interdisciplinary, long-term policy research. Current projects focus on science and technology, global security, social policy and American institutions, the humanities and culture, and education. Its purpose was to provide a forum for a select group of scholars, members of the learned professions, and government and business leaders to work together on behalf of the democratic interests of the republic.

More information is available at www.amacad.org.

Geography and the Humanities
Special Sessions at the 2011 Annual Meeting

The Association of American Geographers is sponsoring a special set of sessions on new interdisciplinary research and practice taking place at the intersections of geography and the humanities at its upcoming Annual Meeting in Seattle, to be held April 12-16, 2011. This special sequence will feature a presentation on the evening of Friday, April 15 by internationally-renowned author Barry Lopez, winner of the National Book Award for Arctic Dreams. His most recent book is Home Ground: Language for an American Landscape. That evening, Lopez will be recognized as the AAG’s 2011 Honorary Geographer.

The AAG welcomes abstracts engaging topics and methods at the crossroads of geography and the humanities, broadly conceived to include the arts. Sessions currently under development involve literature, history, philosophy, popular culture, performance art, and photography and their relation to place, space, landscape, cartography, or other aspects of geography.

Those interested in participating or proposing sessions should submit abstracts of approximately 250 words by November 10, 2010 at www.aag.org/annualmeeting, and should also send the abstract to jketchum@aag.org with “Humanities Sessions” as the subject line.

For additional information please contact AAG Executive Director, Doug Richardson, at drichardson@aag.org.