

# **AAG Hazards Specialty Group**

## **Annual Report 2008-2009**

*April 2009*

### **I. Description and Dues**

The current description is accurate and no changes have been made. Dues remain at \$5 for professional and \$2 for student members.

### **II. Officers**

An election for one Director and one Student Director was held at the Business Meeting in Boston (2008). Heather Bell was elected for a two year term as Director and Johanna Ostling was elected for a two year term as Student Director.

An election for Chair and Director were held at the Business Meeting in Las Vegas (March 2009). Deborah Thomas (University of Colorado-Denver) was elected for a two year term as chair and Mathew Schmidlein (California State University-Sacramento) was elected for a two year term as Director.

Attached to this report is a complete listing of officers and their terms as of the AAG Annual Meeting in Las Vegas (March 2009).

### **III. Accomplishments**

The HSG was active in preparation of the 2009 Annual Meeting of the AAG in Las Vegas. There were 13 sessions this year that were sponsored or co-sponsored by the HSG. However, the AAG meeting program lists a large number additional sessions that include hazards-related papers but whose organizers did not seek Hazards Specialty Group sponsorship. The total number of submitted abstracts on disaster or hazards-related topics at the Boston meeting was 93. Additional efforts will be made in future years to procure sponsorship for a higher percentage of hazards-related sessions.

To increase student participation at the annual meeting, a paper competition (Jeanne X. Kasperson Student Paper Award) sponsored by the HSG was held for the sixth year in a row. Four papers were submitted this year and all were selected by a review committee for participation in this special sponsored session. Award winners had their meeting registration fees paid by the HSG. Ron Hagelman (HSG Chair) served as Discussant for the organized session.

Four doctoral dissertations and four master's theses were submitted for consideration for the 2009 Gilbert F. White Award. The first round of reviews (conducted by six volunteer faculty reviewers) generated a short-list of two dissertations and two theses for a second round of reviews (conducted by 4 additional volunteer faculty reviewers). Based on the quantitative assessments and written review comments, the HSG officers elected to split the award this year between one dissertation and one thesis. Additionally, due to the extremely close scores, the HSG officers elected to list an honorable mention for each category. All are listed below.

## Dissertation

Winner: Erin P. Hughey, University of South Florida, *Longitudinal Study: The Impact of a Comprehensive Emergency Management System on Disaster Response in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas*

Honorable Mention: Anna J. Versluis, Clark University, *We All Live Downstream: Disaster, Land Change and Reciprocity in a Haitian Watershed*

## Thesis

Winner: Giselle C. Pérez, King's College London, *Vulnerability in the Shadows: A Case Study on the San Diego Migrant Hazardscape in a 'War on Terror' Climate*

Honorable Mention: A. Case Watkins, Texas State University, *Through the Lens of Katrina: A Historical Geography of the Social Patterns of Flood Exposure in New Orleans, 1970-2005*

At the Boston business meeting, HSG members voted to make a \$1,000 contribution from specialty group funds to the Gilbert F. White Memorial Fund being raised by the City of Boulder, Colorado and Dr. White's friends and family. At the Las Vegas HSG membership discussed ways to help complete the fund raising efforts underway for the Gilbert F. White Memorial Fund in Boulder, Colorado. We also submitted a second letter to Doug Richardson, Executive Director of the AAG, encouraging the AAG to support the fund and advertise the opportunity for other AAG members to do the same. Dr. Richardson informed the membership that it is the association's policy not to make direct contributions to individual memorial projects, but did list the many efforts that the AAG has made to help memorialize Dr. White's memory and numerous contributions to the field. Those efforts were discussed at the Las Vegas meeting.

HSG members also voted at the Boston meeting to waive specialty group membership fees for incoming AAG members entering the association via the *Developing Nations Membership Program*. This was continued by acclamation at the Las Vegas meeting.

Preparations for the next AAG Annual Meeting in Washington, DC (2010) commenced at the Las Vegas meeting. Anticipated activities include locally focused research-paper sessions, an organized paper session highlighting the winners of the Jeanne X. Kasperson Award, and a Gilbert F. White Research Symposium highlighting the 2009 winners of that award.

The HSG continues to maintain its own stand-alone website hosted by the University of South Carolina. The site, <http://www.cas.sc.edu/cege/hazardsaag/>, is currently maintained by a webmaster (Jerry Mitchell, USC) and includes information on the board of directors, the AAG annual meeting, and the submission process for student awards. The group and its officers also take full advantage of the AAG's listserv capabilities and specialty group discussion board.

#### **IV. Membership and Participation**

Overall, the membership of the HSG has grown significantly over the past few years (178 in 2003, 308 in 2005, 329 in 2007, 315 in 2008, and 331 in 2009). As of the Las Vegas meeting in March of 2009, membership has returned to the 2007 levels after a brief decline in 2008. Students comprise approximately 40% of the current membership.

Attendance at the HSG business meeting in Las Vegas was consistent with previous meetings. The funds in the HSG treasury have grown over the last few years and the specialty group is looking at ways of redistributing funds to membership activities and ways of employing these monies to improve participation.

#### **V. Financial Report**

Please see attached document from John Cross, Secretary/Treasurer.

#### **VI. Special Requests**

No special requests made previous to this year's annual meeting.

#### **Report submitted by:**

Ron R. Hagelman, Texas State University  
Out-going Chair, Hazards Specialty Group  
April 2009

## AAG Hazards Specialty Group Officers as of April 2009

### Chair

Deborah Thomas (2009-2011)  
Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences  
University of Colorado Denver  
P.O. Box 173364, Campus Box 172  
Denver, Colorado 80217-3364  
Phone: 303.556.5292  
Email: [deborah.thomas@cudenver.edu](mailto:deborah.thomas@cudenver.edu)

### Secretary-Treasurer

John A. Cross (2006-2010)  
Department of Geography  
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh  
Oshkosh, WI 54901-8642  
Email: [cross@vaxa.cis.uwosh.edu](mailto:cross@vaxa.cis.uwosh.edu)

### Directors

Mathew Schmidtlein (2009-2011)  
Department of Geography  
California State University  
6000 J Street  
Sacramento, CA  
95819-6003  
Phone: (916) 278-7581  
Email: [schmidtlein@csus.edu](mailto:schmidtlein@csus.edu)

Heather Bell (2008-2010)  
Department of Geography  
University of South Florida  
4202 E. Fowler Ave, NES 107  
Tampa, FL 33620  
Phone: 813-974-4703  
Email: [heatherbell6@hotmail.com](mailto:heatherbell6@hotmail.com)

Johanna Ostling (2008-2010)  
Department of Geography  
Texas State University-San Marcos  
601 University Drive  
San Marcos, Texas 78666  
Email: [jo1135@txstate.edu](mailto:jo1135@txstate.edu)

**Association of American Geographers Hazards Specialty Group  
Treasurer's Report - March 2009**

Funds on deposit at University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Credit Union (90 Wisconsin Street, Oshkosh, WI 54901-3523) in "Specialty Group-AAG Hazards" account.

Account Number: [REDACTED]

Employer Identification Number: [REDACTED]

Balance (April 7, 2008) \$4,284.47

Income:

Interest (April 2008 – December 2008)	\$17.37
Interest (January – February 2009 )	\$2.86
Specialty Group Dues (payment January 8, 2009)*	\$972.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$992.23</b>

\* Specialty Group Dues paid to AAG Central Office after August 31, 2008 not yet sent to specialty groups.

Expenses:

Check for \$1,000 as contribution to Gilbert White Memorial Flood Marker 4/23/2008 to The Community Foundation, Boulder, Colorado +\$1 ck fee	\$1,001.00
Check to reimburse cost of website web hosting fees (April – September) 9/30/2008 to Jerry T. Mitchell \$66.30 + \$1 check fee	\$67.30
Checks to winners of Jeanne X. Kasperson student paper competition to cover AAG Meeting student registration fees:	
9/30/08 to Monica Zappa, Northern Illinois Univ, \$145.00 + \$1 check fee	\$146.00
10/03/08 to Khila Dahal, Texas State Univ. \$145.00 + \$1 check fee	\$146.00
10/03/08 to Christopher Burton, U. of S Carolina \$145.00 + \$1 check fee	\$146.00
10/24/08 to Angela Gilbert, Univ. of S. Florida \$145.00 + \$1 check fee	\$146.00
Checks to Gilbert F. White Award co-winners	
3/18/09 to Erin P. Hughey \$250 +1.00 check fee	\$251.00
3/18/09 to Giselle C. Pérez \$250 +1.00 check fee	\$251.00
<b>TOTAL **</b>	<b>\$2,154.30</b>

\*\*The Specialty Group has not been charged printing or postage expenses this year. Payment for 2009 White Award plaques not yet made.

Balance (March 18, 2009) \$3,122.40