

### AAG Newsletter of the Association of American Geographers

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## Planning Now for the AAG's Centennial Year

As the AAG approaches its centennial anniversary, it is only natural that as a discipline we collectively consider from whence we have come and contemplate where we are headed. That we honor our first centennial as we also celebrate the next 100 years. That we draw from our traditions as we prepare for the future. These are the dual tensions that will increasingly occupy our dialogue as we plan for our Association's Centennial Celebration in Philadelphia less than a year from now.

In these pages during the next year, we will begin a series of articles and editorials that examine facets of the AAG's past 100 years, and which reflect on what lies ahead. This is a discussion that I hope will engage all of our members in one way or another, and that will encompass the full breadth of our discipline, its traditions, and its innovations.

Plans are now underway for retrospective and forward-looking centennial year publications, numerous special events, and an extraordinary Centennial Celebration at the AAG's Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. These all need your ideas, input, and energy to fully realize the opportunity that our centennial offers to examine our discipline's evolution, its current status, and its future trajectory or trajectories. I invite you to consider this unique opportunity as you develop sessions, papers, and presentations for our centennial meeting in Philadelphia. Many AAG specialty groups and regional divisions already have started planning centennial activities for 2004. Our journal editors are examining ways to commemorate the discipline's accomplishments and to focus its challenges. The AAG Council has established a Centennial Coordinating Committee, chaired by Don Janelle and Stan Brunn, to generate ideas for making the 2004 Annual Meeting one of the most memorable in the Association's history. This committee

and the Philadelphia local support committee, together with AAG staff, the Council, and President-Elect Alec Murphy, are developing an extraordinary set of plenary sessions and celebratory events for the Philadelphia meeting. These will include distinguished panels from within the discipline and prominent observers and scholars from outside geography.

Other special areas of focus for the centennial year will include archival research and exhibits on prominent AAG figures from William Morris Davis to the present, Internet projects such as the AAG's *PlacesOnLine*, and the *Geography in America Timeline*. Two centennial books will be published and distributed to all attendees

of the Philadelphia annual meeting. A centennial issue of *The Professional Geographer* will be published, and perhaps, of the *Annals*.

Some centennial celebratory events will be just for fun, such as the proposed "Gaia Gala" masquerade ball at the centennial meeting. "Geography as Art—the Earth Exposed," an exhibit by geographer Stephen Young, will also run concurrently with the centennial meeting at an art gallery in Philadelphia.

To accommodate an AAG meeting of centennial significance, we are returning to Philadelphia, the site of the founding of the AAG, and have extended the meeting by an extra day. As we approach our centennial, geography's relevance to the world around us—our research laboratory, our classroom, and our "client"—has never been greater. It is also clear that our strength as a discipline and as an organization lies both in our diversity and our unity. With this in mind, join with us during the coming year as together we assess and celebrate the past 100 years of our Association, and as we plan for the future. ■



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