

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 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.

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AAG Director of Educational Affairs Osa Brand Retires

On behalf of the staff, Council, and membership of the AAG, I would like to devote this column to honoring the long and valuable service of Dr. Osa Brand, who is retiring after thirteen years as Director of Educational Affairs at the AAG. Osa joined the AAG in January 1990.

Her major initial contributions were to help develop and achieve funding for a project initiated by Saul Cohen, then AAG President, that resulted ultimately in the production of the ARGUS and ARGWorld curriculum materials (see page 6). Other projects included working with Dr. Cohen and a team of



Brand

geographers from several universities to develop and manage a three-year undergraduate minority recruiting initiative; collaboration with Phil Gersmehl and Joseph Stoltman on curriculum materials exchange programs that resulted in the translation of the ARGUS materials to Russian and Japanese; and support of an initiative led by Susan Hanson to develop active-learning teaching modules on the human dimensions of global change. Osa also had advisory roles in several educational projects developed by other organizations, including the Power of Place public television series.

As an AAG representative on the GENIP (Geography Education National Implementation Project) steering committee, Osa interacted regularly on educational issues with the National Council for Geographic Education, the American Geographical Society, and the National Geographic Society. She enjoyed helping to organize the AAG's annual World Geography Bowl and working with other AAG staff to manage the Visiting Geographical Scientist Program. With a strong interest in community college geography, she also helped establish the Community College Affinity Group and

supported a survey of community college geography, which resulted in an AAG publication by Joan Clemons.

Asked for examples of the impact that some of the AAG educational projects have had, Osa noted that the ARGUS and ARGWorld distribution contract with Holt, Rinehart and Winston will ensure that the materials reach well over 200,000 teachers over the next four years. As a result, those projects can help change the way geography is taught in many secondary schools. She was also pleased to be able to say that the undergraduate minority recruitment project made a significant difference

in the lives of the participating students. Many of them described the experience as a major turning point that opened career possibilities they had never before considered. A large number of the students went on to graduate programs and careers in geography.

Osa is planning on a "half-time retirement." She will continue to consult with the AAG on a flexible basis, and will work part-time representing the National Council for Geographic Education from her home in the Washington, DC area. In both roles she will continue to be active in geography education at the national level, and will coordinate with the AAG's new Educational Affairs Director, Dr. Michael Solem (see page 8).

Osa also plans to spend more time with her family, especially her new grandson. Please join me in thanking Osa for her exceptional contributions to the AAG and to geography education, and in wishing her great enjoyment in her "semi-retirement" years ahead. She has been a joy to work with and a wonderful ambassador for geography and the AAG. We thank you for sharing all of this with us, Osa. ■

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