

AAG Newsletter of the Association of American Geographers

Douglas Richardson, Publisher
Megan D. Nortrup,
Editor

AAG Voice 202-234-1450

AAG Fax 202-234-2744

newsletter@aag.org

www.aag.org

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The Ingredients of a Great Centennial Meeting

The Annual Meeting in Philadelphia is shaping up as an event worthy of the AAG's Centennial Anniversary. The Centennial Coordinating Committee and the AAG leadership have developed plans for an expanded meeting, both in length and in special events. It will be a memorable meeting for all—a retrospective and celebration of where we have come and what we have accomplished over the past 100 years, and a collective reflection and assessment of what the future holds for geography.

What goes into the creation of a once-in-a-lifetime Centennial meeting? First of all, a great deal of planning, organization and hard work by AAG members, the Council, special committees, and Meridian Place staff. For our 100th Anniversary meeting, the planning began three years ago with the establishment of a special Centennial Coordinating Committee, chaired by Don Janelle and Stan Brunn. The CCC committee, working closely with AAG officers and staff, has done a terrific job of developing an extraordinary set of memorable special events—intellectual, scholarly, social and celebratory—that will make this one of the most outstanding and important meetings in AAG history.

A few of the special features of the Philadelphia Centennial Meeting include:

- A Centennial Hall of History, featuring archival and historical exhibits, films and presentations on the AAG's first 100 years, that will be a special gathering place for geographers young and old.

- Special Centennial Publications: Two AAG Centennial books, *WorldMinds* and *Technology and Geography*, will be provided to all meeting attendees at no charge. Special Centennial issues of the *Professional Geographer* and the *Annals* also will be published, with related paper and panel sessions planned for Philadelphia. In addition, sev-

eral AAG Regional Divisions and Specialty Groups have centennial publications and sessions planned.

- Dozens of top national science officials will attend to commemorate the AAG's Centennial, including Keynote Speaker Dr. Rita Colwell,

Director of the National Science Foundation, and special plenary guest Dr. Bruce Alberts, Director of the National Academy of Sciences. Other distinguished speakers, including Gil Grosvenor of the National Geographic Society and Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University will be among the many special

visitors honoring the AAG with their presence.

- The Gaia Gala, or the AAG's 100th Birthday Party (also known as "The Geography Party of the Century") will include a dance band, a Mummers band and food and drinks. This leading social event of the Centennial will be an opportunity for everyone to gather, reminisce, prognosticate, and celebrate together. Photo ops abound.

- A larger meeting that has been expanded by a day and a half to accommodate the above activities plus five high-profile Centennial Plenary Sessions, featuring over 20 distinguished speakers ranging from Yi-Fu Tuan to Michael Goodchild, and over 3,000 paper and poster presentations from across the discipline.

- Many other events, including an International Reception, Jobs in Geography sessions, Awards and Honors receptions, Duane Nellis' presidential address at the AAG Banquet, and an Opening Session which includes the keynote address and a string quartet performance of music composed specially for the AAG's Centennial. Other activities are described in more detail in recent issues of the AAG Newsletter and on the AAG's website.



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These special events along with *your* presence are the ingredients of a great Centennial meeting. As you might expect, because of the expanded length of the meeting, and the many special guests, scholarly events, social functions, and publications appropriate and necessary to produce a worthy Centennial Meeting, the registration fee is a bit higher this year. Despite this increase, the registration fees for AAG meetings are still lower than most related associations. For example, ACSM meeting fees are \$300, URISA meeting fees are \$495, and the ASPRS meeting fees are \$360 for members, compared with \$260 for AAG members, even in this special Centennial year.

This year, hotel rooms in Philadelphia will be substantially less expensive (by \$25 per night) than at last year's meeting in New Orleans. In addition, the AAG also has established a special Centennial Fund, for this meeting only, to which members experiencing financial hardship may apply for a reduction in the registration fee, to levels comparable with last year's fee.

AAG meetings are an even better value than many members realize, as we have the extra expenses of rotating meetings from city to city each year, and with an open policy on paper submissions, we require many more meeting rooms for paper presentations, and further, unlike many exclusively humanities or social science disciplines, our map and graphics-intensive presentations require the extra expense of full audio-visual equipment (slide projector, overhead projector, and computer screen projector) in all of our many sessions.

According to experienced meeting planners, given the size and nature of our meetings, the AAG offers one of the great values among professional meetings. With that said, even though many of our costs are set years in advance, we have and will continue to work hard to negotiate the best prices from meeting vendors, such as hotels and A/V suppliers, and to raise funds to offset meeting costs from sponsors and exhibitors, and other external sources. We have made progress in both of these areas in recent years.

So join with colleagues from around the world in Philadelphia for what will be one of the milestone events the history of American geography, and an unforgettable experience. The AAG Centennial Meeting will also be a pivotal gathering as we plan for the AAG's

next hundred years. Your participation in that process is essential.

Doug Richardson
drichardson@aag.org