

AAG Newsletter of the Association of American Geographers

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AAG Reaches Out with Specialty Conferences

The AAG has made very substantial progress during the past year, in areas ranging from improving its finances, to increasing membership, to the development of several important initiatives and new programs. As part of our ongoing efforts to advance several of these initiatives, the AAG will be sponsoring or co-sponsoring three special-focus meetings during 2004.

Consistent with the AAG's strategic plan, and my own strong emphasis on enhancing diversity and furthering geographic scholarship around this topic within the discipline, I have been working closely with Howard University for over

a year to expand geography's presence at this premier historically Black college. As one result of this effort, Howard University has agreed to co-sponsor with the AAG and Binghamton University a conference on **Race, Place, and Ethnicity**, to be held on the Howard University campus in Washington, DC, from 17-19 September 2004. This will create an exceptional opportunity for AAG members to learn from Howard University's long experience, and to bring leading geographic scholars and researchers together with the Howard University community to showcase modern geography's relevance to the educational, research and policy needs of minorities in American society. Orlando Taylor, Dean of the Graduate School at Howard University, has been most supportive of this joint effort, and has expressed a strong interest in working with the AAG in further developing geography programs at Howard. He will also be attending our Centennial Meeting in Philadelphia to meet with the AAG Council and leading scholars as part of this developing relationship.



Richardson

Two years ago, I helped organize the first "Mapping the News" Conference, co-sponsored by the AAG and several other organizations, including the Associated Press, ESRI, the National Geographic Society, and others. The idea (and reality) of bringing geographers together with journalists and media cartographers seemed so

perfect that we at the AAG have agreed to take the lead this year in sustaining this opportunity for geographers. The result is that the AAG is now organizing the second **Mapping the News** conference, which will be held at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, on 14-16 May 2004. We are working

hard to expand our cadre of co-sponsors, and hope to raise all of the funds necessary to conduct the meeting from external sources. We had excellent participation in the initial conference, including many of the major weekly news magazines (*Time*, *US News and World Report*, *Newsweek*, etc.), and dozens of national and regional newspapers, including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and about forty other major city newspapers from across the country. This year we hope to engage more of the electronic and broadcast media as well, and will focus on several subthemes, including "Mapping Elections," a timely topic for 2004.

The AAG also will co-sponsor, and help organize, the **GIScience 2004** Conference, to be held 20-23 October 2004, in College Park, Maryland. This conference focuses on emerging topics and basic research findings across all aspects of geographic information science. Although geographic information science reflects a core intellectual tradition within geography, its current status is highly multidisciplinary, and this

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conference reflects that reality. It is essential, in my view, that geography continue as a source of intellectual leadership in this dynamic area.

Each of the above specialty conferences represents a form of “reaching outward” for geography. It is a way of engaging others; this in turn will enrich our internal debate. I urge you to participate in this outreach, whether at these conferences or in the many other ways possible.

If you would like to participate in any of the above conferences, please contact me at the email below, or visit www.aag.org/meetings for more information. Oh, and I almost forgot to mention: we are holding still another little conference this year, up in Philadelphia in March. Hope to see you all there.

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