

**AAG Newsletter
of the
Association of American
Geographers**

Douglas Richardson, Publisher
and Managing Editor

Megan D. Nortrup,
Editor

AAG Voice 202-234-1450

AAG Fax 202-234-2744

newsletter@aag.org

www.aag.org

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Looking Northward

In the heat of a Washington, DC summer, it is easy to turn one's thoughts to the possibilities for greater collaboration between US and Canadian geographers.

How might we build stronger ties with our colleagues in Canada? What are the needs of arctic researchers? Are we doing enough to document glacial melt related to climate change? How can geographers play a leading role in research related to the upcoming International Polar Year? And what has the AAG Cryosphere Specialty Group been up to lately? These and related questions are on my mind as evidence of global warming accumulates palpably here in Washington.

Fortunately, however, the AAG and the Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) have a long and well established cooperative relationship. We each offer reciprocal memberships to one another's members at discounted rates on our membership forms. Research collaboration and scholarly exchange flows almost seamlessly across our shared borders. The AAG hosts hundreds of Canadian geographers at our annual meetings, including many invited plenary speakers and AAG award recipients, and the CAG also warmly welcomes US geographers to its meetings. The AAG provides financial and organizational support to our Canadian Studies and other Specialty Groups to bring featured speakers from Canada to the AAG meetings, and the Canadian Embassy sponsors research grants for geographical studies in Canada, available to US as well as Canadian researchers, among many examples of mutual support.

Last fall, I traveled to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, the site of the Canadian Association of Geographers upcoming 2007 Annual Meeting, to explore further concrete ways in which the AAG and the CAG could develop stronger ties and coordination of activities among our members

and between our Associations. During discussions with organizers of the CAG 2007 meeting, including University of Saskatchewan geography department chair Bill Archibold and faculty members, the general topic of US/Canadian cross boundary issues was discussed, and the idea of sponsoring a series of joint sessions around this topic at both the AAG and CAG 2007 Annual Meetings was developed.

Specific US/Canadian cross-boundary topics addressed in the joint sessions might include indigenous peoples, the environment, water, national parks, timber sales, terrorism, trade, immigration/migration, or many other issues. Some of the paper presenters or discussants hopefully would be able to participate in both of

our annual meetings for continuity of discussion, while some others would only participate in one or the other of the meetings.

The joint sessions will be advertised as high profile events at both of our annual meetings next year, and a balance of US and Canadian speakers will be encouraged in each session. The CAG president and the AAG president will be invited to help introduce the sessions.

While I may be "looking northward" during July and August in Washington, DC, it is important to remember that the US and Canada share not only a north-south border, but also a lengthy east-west boundary between Alaska and Canada as well. Geographers Mike Sfraga, Roger Pearson, and others at the University of Alaska have created some very interesting multi-institutional geography degree programs and are playing a key role in representing the United States in cross-boundary International Polar Year research activities. They have committed already to sharing their experiences in working on



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these "east-west" US/Canadian cross-boundary issues during the first of our joint AAG/CAG sessions.

It is my hope that these new joint AAG/CAG sessions will become a regular feature of our annual meetings, and engender research and collaborative dialogue over a period of years on cross boundary geographic issues. I encourage AAG members and invite CAG members to participate in these sessions, and also to attend the annual meetings of both the CAG and the AAG. A formal Call for Papers follows below.

AAG-CAG Joint Sessions: Call for Participation

The Association of American Geographers and the Canadian Association of Geographers invite both Canadian and US

researchers to submit papers to a series of special jointly-sponsored sessions to be held at both the 2007 AAG Annual Meeting in San Francisco, on April 17-21, and the 2007 CAG Annual Meeting in Saskatoon, on May 29 - June 2.

The theme of these special sessions will be "US/Canadian Cross-Boundary Issues," and topics around this theme might address the environment, indigenous peoples, water, immigration/migration, national parks, timber sales, terrorism, trade, fisheries, tourism, energy, boundary disputes, and many others. While papers submitted may be presented at either one or both of the meetings, we encourage speakers to consider attending both meetings if possible in order to achieve greater continuity in the exploration and discussion of these

topics among geographers during the course of these sessions at both the AAG and CAG annual meetings.

If you would like to submit a paper for possible inclusion in these joint sessions, please email a 250 word abstract with title and keywords to Douglas Richardson at meeting@aag.org and to Bill Archibold at w.archibold@usask.ca by October 26, 2006. Please indicate whether your submission is for both meetings, or just one (specify which meeting if so). Please place "AAG/CAG Joint Sessions" in the subject line of your email.

I hope to see you in San Francisco *and* Saskatoon in 2007. ■

Doug Richardson
drichardson@aag.org