

AAG Newsletter
of the
Association of American Geographers

Douglas Richardson, Publisher
and Managing Editor

Jim Ketchum, Editor

AAG Voice 202-234-1450

AAG Fax 202-234-2744

newsletter@aag.org

www.aag.org

USPS 987-380 ISSN 0275-3995

The AAG Newsletter ISSN 0275-3995 is published monthly with July/August combined, 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.

When your address changes, please notify the Association office immediately. Six weeks notice is necessary to insure uninterrupted delivery of AAG publications. To assist the AAG office in your address change, include the address label with your change of address.

Postmaster: Send address changes to AAG Newsletter, 1710 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009-3198, or address@aag.org.

Indigenous Geographies of Struggle and Self-Determination

This year, an extraordinary gathering of researchers, scholars, and local knowledge experts will assemble in Boston for an array of special indigenous peoples geography symposia, sessions, satellite meetings, and keynote presentations during the AAG's 2008 Annual Meeting. The issues they will address and the questions they raise are among the most intellectually engaging and ethically challenging of those facing of our world today, its history, and its future.

One such event, a unique two-day symposium entitled *Indigenous Geographies of Struggle and Self-determination*, will be jointly sponsored by three major indigenous geography research and scholarly organizations: the AAG Indigenous Peoples Specialty Group (IPSG), the Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge and Rights Commission of the International Geographers Union (IGU), and the Native Canadians Specialty Group of the Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG). This Symposium will be held during the first two days of the AAG meeting, April 15-16, 2008.

A related pre-conference meeting in Plymouth, Massachusetts, will also bring together geographers invited from around the world who work with Indigenous peoples, to aid in creating a network and to share research and experiences. This meeting will also allow for informal gatherings and exploration of the local area and history. While in Plymouth, pre-conference attendees will also be meeting with the local Native American community, the Mashpee Wampanoag.

The Indigenous Geographies Symposium

The jointly sponsored AAG, IGU, and CAG Symposium was conceived as a way to bring Indigenous Geographies to the forefront in the discipline as a whole and will showcase research and methodological work in the field, and establish stronger theoretical linkages and intersections within geography. As Jay Johnson and Soren Larson said in the Call for Papers

for the symposium sessions, *New Stories for Old Places: Theorizing the Philosophy and Politics of Place for Indigenous Geographies*, "Although indigenous topics are again stimulating tremendous interest and excitement in geography, this emergent research project remains underdeveloped in its theoretical dimensions...We seek papers that respond to the task of bringing together the philosophy and politics of indigenous places in imaginative and theoretically grounded ways, including the use of indigeneity itself as inspiration and wellspring to work out connections between place as phenomenon and as a political and/or development project."



Richardson

Participants in the symposium are also invited to engage broader debates

in contemporary geography, such as those involving postcolonialism, nationalism and tribalism, postdevelopment and so-called 'non-capitalisms,' and the role of critical consciousness in developing place-based pedagogies.

A sampling of the range of intriguing sessions to be presented at the joint AAG, IGU, CAG Symposium on Indigenous Geographies includes the following:

- Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples I: Scientific, Historical and Indigenous Perspectives
- Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples III: Policy and Justice
- Indigenous Geography and Education: Negotiating pedagogy in the classroom and the discipline
- Informing GIScience with Indigenous Knowledge
- Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas: Conservation through Self-Determination
- Indigenous Tourism
- New Stories for Old Places I: Philosophy of Place for Indigenous Geographies
- The Colonial Present I: Reclaiming Sovereignty and Identity

Continued on page 15

- The Colonial Present III: Cultural and Material Property
- The Colonial Present V: Post-Coloniality and Indigenous Scholarship
- Alternative Nationalisms: (Un)Doing National Spaces of Belonging
- Geography of Sovereignty
- Indigenous Methodologies: Collaborative Research Strategies
- Geography Encounters the Indigenous: Assessing Theory and Methodology in Human Geography

Methodologies sessions such as those last few listed above have over the past few years generated valuable discussion and served to showcase what research in indigenous geography has to offer to methods in human geography more broadly, as Doug Herman, Senior Geographer at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian, has pointed out. The above session "Geography Encounters the Indigenous," for example, is explicitly intended to cross pollinate, by bringing in prominent non-indigenous human geographers to jointly explore methodological and epistemological questions in Indigenous Geographies research and in other areas of geography.



The official seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

At the AAG annual meeting in Boston, the Indigenous Peoples Specialty Group also will be sponsoring keynote speaker, Dr. Daniel Wildcat from Haskell Indian Nations Univer-

sity, who will speak on "title or subject of talk". Dr. Wildcat is a professor at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. An accomplished scholar who writes on indigenous



Wildcat

knowledge, technology, environment, and education, he is also co-director of the Haskell Environmental Research Studies Center, which he founded with colleagues from the Center for Hazardous Substance Research at Kansas State University. A Yuchi member of the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma, Wildcat is the co-author, with Vine Deloria, Jr., of *Power and Place: Indian Education in America* (Fulcrum, 2001). His newest book, *Red Alert! Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge*, will be released later this year.

Complete information on the Indigenous Geographies symposium, its sessions, and the papers to be presented is available in the AAG preliminary program (www.aag.org), and on the IPSC website at www.pacificworlds.com/ipsc/meetings.html. Congratulations are in order to Jay Johnson, Doug Herman, Laura Smith, and many others at the AAG IPSC, as well as to our colleagues and friends at the CAG and IGU for jointly organizing this special international symposium on indigenous geographies research.

Charles Mann to speak on 1491

Also complementing the many indigenous peoples activities highlighted above, as well as several others scheduled for the Boston meeting, will be a keynote presentation by Charles Mann, author of *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*, who has also tentatively agreed to speak at the Boston meeting, and who, coincidentally, has just been selected as the AAG 2008 Honorary Geographer.

The AAG's Honorary Geographer award recognizes excellence in research, teaching, or writing on geographic topics by non-geogra-

phers. Mann's recent work, typified by *1491*, exemplifies a deep understanding of the impact geographical facts and processes can have across space and over time. His writings on pre-Columbian Indian landscapes, populations, and cultures have prompted an intellectually rich discourse on how history has described the land the Europeans encountered when they first arrived in the Americas. This discourse, in turn, has been the root of a shift in our basic understanding of the pre-colonial Americas.

Mann's *1491* was published to wide critical acclaim, and was named Book of the Year by the Boston Globe, the New York Times, and the San Francisco Chronicle, among others. The National Academy of Sciences bestowed the Keck Award on *1491*, as the best book of the year. The book challenges the general premise that, prior to Columbus's arrival in 1492, the "new world" was sparsely populated by culturally primitive peoples. On the contrary, suggests Mann, the Americas were likely much more densely populated than previously thought and the influence of Indians on the world around them was far from negligible. Mann has an extensive background in science writing for the public and is a correspondent for *Science* magazine and *The Atlantic Monthly*.

Charles Mann's presence at the AAG Annual Meeting in Boston will further enhance the already very impressive agenda of scholarly and research work on and with indigenous peoples at this year's AAG meeting. I invite you to engage with the



Mann

many geographers who are active researchers in the field of Indigenous Geographies while in Boston, and to add your perspective and insight to this creative and rapidly evolving research area of geography. I also urge you to think about concrete ways in which geographers can help support indigenous peoples in the United States and around the world whose lives and livelihoods are threatened still today. ■

Doug Richardson
drichardson@aag.org