

## AAG Newsletter of the Association of American Geographers

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# Washington, DC: Building Partnerships for Geography

The Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting for 2010 was held April 14-18 in Washington, D.C. Breaking all previous records, more than 8,000 geographers, GIS specialists, environmental scientists, and other scholars attended the conference from around the world to share the very latest in research, policy, and applications in geography, sustainability, and GIScience. Of those attending, approximately 26% came from countries other than the U.S., which continues a steady trend toward increased international participation at AAG Meetings. For comparison, the 2006 meeting in Chicago registered approximately 20% international attendees, while the 1982 meeting in San Antonio had only 59 international attendees, or 2.8% of the registered total.

This year, attendees came from 81 different countries, including 58 nations of developing or emerging economies. The largest participation of scholars from outside of the U.S. came from Canada, the U.K. and Germany, with strong representation among geographers in developing regions coming from China, Korea, and Brazil. Many others attended from countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ghana, Hong Kong, Iran, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mexico, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Romania, Spain, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, and many more to share in the stimulating intellectual and social events throughout the week-long conference.

The AAG celebrated the global character of the association and the meeting by holding an In-

ternational Greeting and Networking Reception in the Exhibit Hall as part of the Thursday evening conference events. The reception provided an opportunity for attendees to mingle with more than 90 booths of exhibitors, including the International Geographical Union, as well as to meet with other attendees from around the world while enjoying refreshments. The AAG showcased its many international activities, including the AAG Developing Regions Membership Program which engages eligible geographers and other colleagues from lower income countries of the world with full membership benefits at deeply discounted rates.

World-renowned primatologist, anthropologist, environmentalist, and humanitarian **Dr. Jane Goodall**, Ph.D., DBE, and UN Messenger for Peace presented a keynote lecture to thousands of attendees on Friday evening. She also received



Jane Goodall receives the AAG Atlas Award from Doug Richardson.

the inaugural **AAG Atlas Award**, celebrating outstanding accomplishments that advance world understanding in exceptional ways. Her address, entitled "Gombe and Beyond: The Next 50 Years," reflected – both personally and professionally – on the meaning of the past five decades, the extraordinary changes the world has seen since 1960, and the impact these changes have had on people, animals and the environment we all share.

The AAG Annual Meeting also featured several important research tracks and special events, many with strong international dimensions. The themed session tracks included Climate Change, with over 50 sessions running on two continuous tracks over the course of the conference, including the Presidential Plenary, "America's Climate Choices," chaired by AAG President **Carol P. Harden**; a track on Geography & Human Rights,

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Bridgewater State College displayed a 22-foot tall globe in the atrium of the conference hotel.

featuring a "Human Rights 101" workshop in which participants gained an understanding of key human rights concepts in international and geographical perspective; and other research tracks such as Enhancing Diversity in Higher Education, Place Names and Gazetteers; and Geography & Mental Health tracks.

Recipient of a Nobel Prize in 2008 for groundbreaking work in economic geography and international trade, **Paul Krugman**, Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, gave a Plenary Address and received recognition as the AAG's 2009 Honorary Geographer. **Nora Volkow**, M.D., director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), presented her research on "The Addicted Human Brain" and was honored as the AAG's 2010 Honorary Geographer. The 2010 AAG Presidential Award was conferred by Past President **John Agnew** to **Peter Meusbürger** during the AAG Past President's Address held on Thursday evening.

A set of panel sessions featured continuing work by the AAG with the U.S. Department of State's Global Dialogues on Emerging Science and Technology initiative, which has promoted the use of **Geospatial Science for Sustainable Development in Africa** through organizational

capacity building and the strengthening of spatial data infrastructure. A special public briefing was held to announce the **Eye on Earth Summit**, a multi-partner initiative that includes the AAG, which will be convened Abu Dhabi, UAE this coming November.

A rare and beautiful exhibit of more than fifty reproductions of 16th and 17th century maps and manuscripts by influential Ottoman Turkish cartographers, entitled *From Piri Reis to Katip Çelebi: The Ottoman Worldview* were displayed at the AAG Annual Meeting. A reception and ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the exhibit was sponsored by senior Turkish governmental and academic officials. Words of welcome were given by **Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, **Bekir Karliga**, Head of the Civilization Studies Center at Bahcesehir University in Istanbul, and AAG Executive Director **Doug Richardson**.

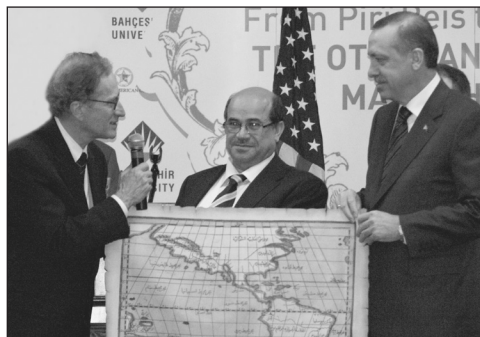
A group of officials and national representatives of various specialized organizations of the Organization of American States also gathered during the conference to broaden understanding of various institutional initiatives, to consider priorities affecting the hemisphere, and to strengthen collaboration among the respective interests of the specialized organizations of the

OAS, hosted by the United States National Section of the PanAmerican Institute for Geography and History (USNS-PAIGH) Geography Commission and the AAG. Among the attendees were representatives of the Geography, Cartography, and History commissions of PAIGH as well as special guests from sister specialized organizations of OAS, namely, the InterAmerican Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), and the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM).

The above summary represents only a few of the many exciting sessions and international activities that took place at the 2010 AAG Annual Meeting. Numerous other paper, poster, and panel sessions and presentations highlighted geographic work organized by AAG members and AAG Specialty and Affinity Groups. A selection of photographs from the conference follows below, illustrating just some of the many events and special moments that took place at this year's meeting.

We thank all of you for making this year's conference a great success and invite you to attend the next AAG Annual Meeting, to be held in Seattle, Washington from April 12-16, 2010. We look forward to seeing you there. ■

Doug Richardson and everyone at the AAG



Doug Richardson (left) welcomes Prime Minister and head of state of Turkey Recep Erdoğan (far right), and Professor Bekir Karliga of Bahcesehir University in Istanbul, to the opening ceremony of a special exhibit of Ottoman maps at the Annual Meeting.



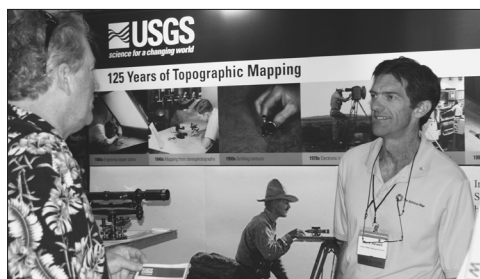
The Presidential Plenary, "America's Climate Choices," organized by AAG President Carol Harden included panelists (left to right) Diana Liverman, Tom Wilbanks, B.L. Turner, Matt Larsen, Carol Harden, Ian Kraucunas, and Marilyn Brown.



Paul Krugman, 2009 AAG Honorary Geographer (right) gave a plenary lecture at the Annual Meeting. To his right is AAG Conference Director Oscar Larson.



Dr. Jane Goodall holds the crystal globe from the inaugural AAG Atlas Award, which she received on Friday evening.



Mark Newell answered questions at the popular USGS booth in the Exhibition Hall.



The grounds of the conference hotel provided a pleasant setting to enjoy the beautiful spring-like weather in Washington, D.C.





Deputy Director of the U.S. Census Bureau, Thomas Mesenbourg, discussed the 2010 Census.



Peter Meusburger (left) of the University of Heidelberg receives the AAG Presidential Achievement Award from AAG Past President John Agnew.



The jobs in geography (JIG) center remained busy throughout the conference.



Nora Volkow, M.D., (right), Director of NIH's National Institute on Drug Abuse, accepts the AAG's 2010 Honorary Geographer Award from Doug Richardson.



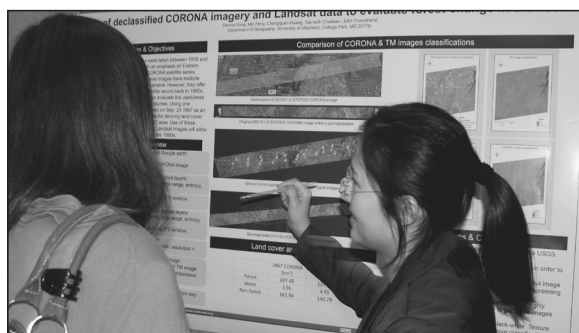
Meagan Todd (right) of the University of Kentucky accepts congratulations as one of the winning World Geography Bowl team members from AAG President Carol Harden.



Washington native Sarah Luria, Dept. of English, Holy Cross, and Phillip Kennicott, culture critic for the Washington Post, led an AAG field trip to the "forgotten" eastern end of the National Mall.



Bill Carstensen of Virginia Tech organized and moderated the World Geography Bowl.



Danxia Song, graduate student at the University of Maryland, discusses her poster on forest change with a passerby in the poster hall.



Michael Gould, ESRI's Director of Higher Education, discusses the ESRI display in the exhibition hall with interested onlookers.



Attendees from Google line up for a group shot in front of their large booth in the Exhibition Hall.



Doug Richardson and John Hébert (right), Director of the Library of Congress Geography & Map Division, sign an agreement to archive, digitize, and co-distribute the Geographers on Film collection.