

AAG Newsletter
of the
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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

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Welcoming International Geographical Societies to New York

One of the greatest pleasures of a sometimes grueling travel schedule is the opportunity to meet with my

counterparts and colleagues at other geographical societies. I always try to find time to meet with them, to share information and news regarding geography, to discuss possible collaborations, and when possible to participate in their annual meetings.

This year in New York City all geographers in attendance will have the opportunity to welcome dozens of leaders of geographical societies from around the globe. A special session will feature a series of brief summaries of the status of geography in other countries from top officials of their national geographical associations. This kaleidoscope of international geography will provide a venue for leaders of international associations to interact with one another, and with AAG meeting attendees as well. This special session, entitled "Snapshots: Geography in the World Today," will be held from 2:30 - 6:20 p.m. on Sunday, February 26, 2012 in the Nassau B room of the New York Hilton Hotel, and will be moderated by Ken Foote, AAG Past President. Please join Ken, me, and our international guests for what promises to be a fascinating exchange on the status of geography worldwide.

During my sabbatical this past year, I was able to meet with many and varied geographical societies throughout Europe and Asia. Many of these societies now will be working together with the AAG on ongoing projects, such as the *International Encyclopedia of Geography*, and on preparations for a geography presence at the decadal UN Sustainable Development Conference (also known as Rio+20), to be held in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro. We welcome the participation of all other

societies that may be interested in these activities.

New Collaborations with China

As part of a two-month visiting professorship at the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), I was fortunate to be able to attend the annual meeting of the Geographical Society of China (GSC), held in Urumqi (Wulumuqi) in Xinjiang Province, as well as to work with many others

to establish and solidify multiple collaborative initiatives between the AAG and leading Chinese geographical institutions, including the GSC, the CAS, and many university geography departments throughout China.

These collaborative projects and programs encompass geographic research, international education, publications, specialty scientific meetings, larger international conferences, and academic exchanges. An ad hoc GSC-AAG Liaison and Coordination Committee has been established to help coordinate, sustain, and further develop and expand these collaborations. Its initial members include eight leading geographers from China and the US: Zhou Chenghu (CAS), Yu Lizhong (President of East Normal China University), Liu Weidong (CAS), Zhang Guoyou (CSG), Michael Solem and Douglas Richardson (AAG), Mei-Po Kwan (OSU); and Alexander Murphy (U-Oregon). Initial co-chairs of the committee are Yu Lizhong and myself. These joint projects are cross-cutting and designed to produce progress for geography in both countries, and to foster broader personal and professional interaction among individual geographers from the US and China.

The AAG and the Geographical Society of China will formalize these current collaborative activities through the signing of



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a Memorandum of Understanding, developed during my recent trip to China. This formal signing ceremony will occur during the AAG Annual Meeting in New York City at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, February 26, after the conclusion of the special international sessions mentioned above, and will precede Ken Foote's Past President's Address in the Sutton Parlor Center on the

second floor of the Hilton. All are invited to attend.

I encourage you to take a moment to welcome our international attendees from all countries to the AAG meeting in New York City, and to explore with them ways in which we might mutually benefit from our exchanges and strengthen geography through our collective efforts. Thanks,

and I hope you enjoy the meeting in New York, meeting old and new friends, enriching our discipline and ourselves intellectually and socially, and perhaps along the way also addressing the many needs of our interconnected world. ■

Doug Richardson
drichardson@aag.org