Greetings from the Chair

I write this column from my home in east-central Illinois, on a mid-October afternoon, wondering: why is it still 83 degrees outside? I'm a Minnesotan. I need autumn; I need frost and snow; I need the challenge of winter, a season that every year, Garrison Keillor says, makes a serious attempt to kill you if you're not careful. Winter also helps make the subsequent spring that much more enjoyable, and the AAG meeting is usually the first chance of the year where I might get to wear shorts.

This is my first of six newsletter columns I'll be writing as chair of the RGSG over the next three years. Instead of repeating the mundane things I've already said (e.g. in my Knowledge Community posting from September, in my Spring 2016 newsletter blurb) about annual meetings, committees, or initiatives, I thought I'd use these opportunities to say a few things about rural geography.

Let's break this down: rural + geography. First, what's rural? That's exactly the question my PhD advisor, Lisa Harrington (Kansas State), asked my classmates and I in her course we were in over ten years ago. Uncertain, we all gave question-answers that included: "not urban?", "maybe urban but not urban-urban?", "it depends?", and "you know it when you see it". I continue to ask myself that question whenever I'm
working on something rural, but I’ve yet to come up with an actual definition. We all have a “rural”.

Now, what’s geography? There’s a million-dollar question. Again, we all have our own. The best I’ve heard comes from Dr. Charles “Fritz” Gritzner, a professor from South Dakota State University. His was a three-part definition: 1) what is where? 2) why is it there? and 3) why should we care? (Gritzner 2002). I used to adhere to the idea that “anything can be geography” because “everything happens somewhere”. This could be true, but that mentality can ignore Fritz’s first two points about “where” and “there”, and focuses only on the “why should we care?” part. Caring is great, but caring is not geography. Further, caring is easy, and can quickly become someone trying only to impose their case, their cause, or their opinions onto others; but caring only works as geography if preceded by the “where” and the “there”.

So in my first newsletter column, I encourage all of you to keep in mind the “where” and the “there”. To keep your work grounded, first and foremost, in geography. The “where” and the “there”, our ability to understand spatial patterns, relationships, and connections amongst and between people, environments, or human-environment interactions (somewhere) on planet Earth - these are what make us Geographers. We all have talents and abilities that make us unique, useful, and an indispensable part of academia and society. As you’re all preparing your AAG papers, posters, publications, outreach efforts, or classroom lectures, do not forget the “where” and the “there”.

Annual Meeting, Dates, and Posters

Contributed by Chris Laingen

Some important dates to remember regarding the upcoming meeting in New Orleans:

- October 25, 2017: Abstract submission deadline
- November 8, 2017: Session organization deadline
- January 2017: Preliminary Program online
- February 14, 2018: Poster abstract submission deadline
- February 23, 2018: Abstract & session editing deadline
- April 10 - 14, 2018: AAG Annual Meeting New Orleans

The AAG’s new annual meeting website (http://annualmeeting.aag.org/) seems to function much more intuitively than the former interface, at least from my use of it while registering, submitting my abstract, and organizing my session. Please visit it as soon as you can to register; and although it seems like Oscar extends the abstract deadline each year, one of these years that might not happen -- so please get yours uploaded by the October 25th deadline! Themes for the New Orleans meeting are: 1) hazards, geography, and gisscience, 2) black geographies, and 3) public engagement in geography. When you submit an abstract, you’re given the opportunity to indicate whether or not your abstract/session relates to one of those themes.

Oscar is also pushing the idea of increasing the number of poster presentations for New Orleans, and for AAG meetings in the future. Paper sessions require time and rooms. Many, many, many rooms. And more time = Saturday afternoon sessions that end at 6:00pm where the session presenters are talking to themselves. More rooms = more money. And more money = higher registration fees for us. So if you want to do your part...
to help lower the $295 registration fee and make it home to your family and job earlier, present a poster!

**Sponsoring Sessions**

Many of us have or will soon be organizing sessions for the New Orleans AAG meeting. As you do so, please add the Rural Geography Specialty Group as a sponsor of that session -- and encourage any colleagues who may not be RGSG members, if their session has a rural theme, to do the same. Formally, non-RGSG members should contact myself or any of our other directors or committee members to ask permission, but if you’re already a RGSG member and your session deals with “rural”, please feel free to go ahead and use the RGSG as a sponsor without asking permission. I think it would be great if we could have somewhere around 40 sponsored session. This would keep us aligned with where we’ve been the past few years (see graph).

![Graph: RGSG sponsored session at AAG Meetings, 2004-2017](image)

Further, after the abstract deadline has passed, Oscar typically emails those of us who have organized sessions and asks us for help organizing additional sessions -- which essentially involves browsing the remaining session-less abstracts (searching for the keyword “rural,” for example) that people have submitted, and building new sessions. This helps Oscar and the conference organizers immensely, as it means fewer abstracts for those folks to have to weed through and put into sessions, plus it allows us (the rural experts) to place abstracts into sessions that belong together. I’ll be sure to send out a reminder when this period of time, which is usually no lengthier than a couple of weeks, draws near.
Rural Geography CFPs for 2018 AAG Meeting

Rather than copy/paste the text from all of the CFPs that have come across our emails and Knowledge Community, I thought I’d simply list their titles; if you want more information, all of these and their details (explanations, who to contact, etc.) are listed as Discussion Posts on the RGSG Knowledge Community site: [CLICK HERE (you’ll probably have to log-in using your own credentials)]

- New Voices in Rural Geography
- Rural Geography in Africa, Asia, and Middle and South America
- Engaging Rural Publics
- Sustainability in Challenging Environments: Building Connections
- New patterns of immigration in rural areas
- Farmer decision-making in a changing world
- Tropical Conservation, Development & Agriculture Short Papers
- Global Rural Transitions and Sustainability (IGU-CSRS sponsored)
- Agrobiodiversity in Conflict & Post-Conflict Landscapes
- Climate Change Adaptation Among Individual Land Holders and Resource Managers

Rural Quadrennial 2019

Submitted by Cheryl Morse

Peter Nelson (Middlebury College) and Cheryl Morse (University of Vermont) are pleased to announce they will host the Ninth Quadrennial Conference of British, Canadian, and American Rural Geographers in Vermont, USA. The tentative dates for the meeting are Saturday, July 13- Friday, July 19, 2019. The conference theme is “Working Landscapes and Livable Communities.” We will spend time at the University of Vermont, Middlebury College, and the Mad River Valley. Field studies will take us to the Northeast Kingdom and Champlain Valley regions of the state. More information and a call for applications will be available in 2018.

Recent and Forthcoming Publications

Submitted by RGSG members. Thanks to all who submitted! Submit publications for the next newsletter (to appear in October 2017) to rgsgnews@gmail.com.


Powell, L.J. and Wittman, H. 2017, Farm to school in British Columbia: mobilizing food literacy for food sovereignty. Agriculture and Human Values. doi.org/10.1007/s10460-017-9815-7


Calls

Both submitted by Holly Barcus at Macalaster

International Geographic Union- Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems (IGU-CSRS) would like to invite papers and presentations for the 26th Annual Meeting to be held in Santiago, Spain July 16-21, 2018. The conference theme is: Infinite Rural Systems in a Finite Planet: Bridging Gaps towards Sustainability. Abstract deadline is January 15, 2018. More information can be found at http://26ruralcolloquium.eu/.

International Geographic Union - Regional Meeting will be held in Quebec City, Canada August 6-10, 2018. More information can be found at http://igu2018.ulaval.ca/.

Field Notes

A photo from Alexandra Giancarlo, from her fieldwork in southwestern Louisiana in fall 2016: “I was conducting an ethnography of black trail riding, a highly popular weekly activity that occurs within black Creole communities (mixed-race French heritage people who have been in the area since the 1700s). It pays homage to participants’ ancestors, many of whom were among the first cattlemen and women in Louisiana and Texas.”
Awards

Submitted by Chris Laingen, with contributions from Cheryl Morse.

In Boston, the Rural Geography Specialty Group held competitions for the Student Paper Award and the inaugural Student Poster Award. The Student Paper Award winner was Andrew Maclaren from the University of Aberdeen. Andrew’s paper was titled: “More-than-Representational Knowledges of Rural Ageing.” The Student Poster Award winner was Matthew Brooks from Kansas State University. The title of Matthew’s poster was: “Countering Depopulation in Kansas: Understanding Perceptions of Rural Life and the Effectiveness of the Rural Opportunity Zone Program.” Congratulations to Andrew and Matthew!

The RGSG also honored three of our distinguished faculty members. The John Fraser Hart Award, established to recognize a scholar who has achieved and maintained excellence in the fields of agricultural and/or rural geographic research was awarded to Dr. Darrell E. Napton of South Dakota State University. The Donald Q. Innis Award, established to recognize a scholar who has demonstrated research excellence in the areas of agricultural and food geographies was awarded to Dr. Leslie A. Duram of Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. And the Lifetime Achievement Award, established to recognize individuals whose accomplishment have distinguished them at a level above and beyond their peers was awarded to Dr. John C. Hudson of Northwestern University. Darrell, Leslie, and John were all honored at the AAG Awards Luncheon. Congratulations to Darrell, Leslie, and John!
Dr. Leslie A. Duram receiving her award from AAG President, Glen MacDonald.

Dr. Darrell E. Napton receiving his award from AAG President, Glen MacDonald.
Members of John Hudson’s Lifetime Achievement Award paper session, left-right: Chris Laingen, Dawn Drake, John Hudson, Susy Ziegler, and Roger Auch.

Along with honoring our three award winners (officially) at the AAG Awards Luncheon, we also had a great turnout at the RGSG social gathering at the aptly-named Globe Bar and Cafe, a few blocks down from the Convention Center. Cheryl Morse, our Awards Chair, did a bang-up job organizing this event, hosting, and passing out drink tickets. As noted by Cheryl, “We thank all attendees who shared their stories, congratulations, and admiration for the award winners. Meeting outside the conference center and in a space with a sense of place was a big hit, and we hope to host future receptions in local establishments.”
The upcoming AAG meeting in New Orleans will once again feature Student Paper and Student Poster competitions (see https://rgsg.wordpress.com/awards/ for more information), and in the fall of 2018 we will be holding our Student Research competition. This competition will be focused on selecting an outstanding student who will represent the RGSG at the Quadrennial British-Canadian-American Conference on Rural Geography which will be held in the summer of 2019 in Vermont. Money awarded will be used to help offset cost of attendance. More information on the Quad Meeting will be forthcoming and advertised via the RGSG webpage and AAG Knowledge Community.

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<th>Awards advertised the fall prior, and awarded at or just after the AAG meeting</th>
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Upcoming RGSG Awards schedule.

**Please encourage students and colleagues to apply for our diverse awards!**

Contact awards chair Cheryl Morse with questions!
Student Success Story: Andrew Maclaren

Andrew Maclaren, a PhD student funded by the University of Aberdeen and James Hutton Institute, has had a successful year - his work a wonderful example of how students can use the experience of presenting a paper in an awards session to help further their academic and professional potential and opportunities.

Andrew won the 2017 Rural Geography Specialty Group (RGSG) of the American Association of Geographers (AAG) Student Paper Competition with his presentation “More-than-Representational Knowledges of Rural Ageing”. He gave this presentation as part of the ‘New Voices in Rural Geography’ session at the AAG Annual Conference in April held in Boston, Massachusetts this year. Andrew followed this up with by winning the European Society for Rural Sociology (ESRS) Student Paper Competition.

The ESRS is the leading European association for those interested in the study of rural issues, from agriculture and fisheries, to rural change and development, cultural heritage, and nature and environmental care, among many more. The society runs a number of research and study groups and the journal Sociologia Ruralis is published on its behalf. As part of the society’s ongoing activities, the ESRS holds a biennial conference, with this year’s being held in Kraków, Poland.

Andrew’s paper was titled ‘Affective lives of rural ageing’ and was presented at the ‘Ageing Rural Communities’ working group. The paper has subsequently been accepted for publication and is now in press with the journal Sociologia Ruralis. The paper aims to explore the affective and emotional lives of older people living in rural Scotland, specifically drawing on non-representational theories as a mode of thought to attend to this aim. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, the paper explores the more-than-human nature of rural spaces that older people experience. It also considers socialities as a contour of rural ageing and the notion of atmosphere as part of an affective and emotional element of rural living.

Andrew, who is also the postgraduate representative of the Rural Geography Research Group (RGRG) of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of
British Geographers), is in the final year of his PhD studies and is busy writing his thesis for a summer 2018 completion.

Andrew and his supervisors (Left, Lorna Philip, right, Mags Currie) at the ESRS in Kraków

Thanks for reading the Fall 2017 RGSG Newsletter! You can submit content to Lisa at any time for upcoming newsletters. Email it to rgsgnews@gmail.com!