

THE BIOGEOGRAPHER

Newsletter of the Biogeography Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers
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BSG Executive Board

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Rosemary Sherriff, Univ. of Hawaii-Hilo; **Catherine Yansa**, Michigan State Univ.; **Michelle Goman**, Cornell Univ.

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Taly Drezner (Secretary-Treasurer), York Univ.; **Duane Griffin** (Editor), Bucknell Univ.

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President's Column

Greetings Biogeographers!

Fall is the season to prepare abstracts and network with one another in anticipation of the upcoming AAG meeting. I look forward to this meeting each spring. It is a great opportunity to showcase our latest research results, learn about exciting advances in our fields, catch up with colleagues and friends, and meet new people.

My experiences at AAG meetings have been positive and memorable, strongly influencing my identity as a biogeographer. So, last spring, I gladly contributed to a UBC graduate forum on how to prepare for the AAG meeting. Below are some of my responses to the graduate students' questions about the value and importance of conferences. I thought I would share them with you as we look forward to the meeting in Boston next spring.

What is the purpose of a conference?

For all of us, conferences are a chance to learn about new and interesting developments in our fields of research. We present our research ideas and gain feedback from peers with similar research interests. We meet others with similar interests and make professional connections for future collaborations. Conferences are an excellent opportunity to become actively involved in a professional organization.

For graduate students conferences are also an opportunity to gain exposure and advance your academic careers. Masters students may be shopping for a PhD program and PhD students may be shopping for future research collaborations including post-doctoral or academic positions.

What are strategies for networking? How do you approach someone?

One of the most challenging moments at a conference is to introduce yourself to senior researchers in your field and/or potential future research supervisors. Ideally, your thesis supervisor or one of your committee members will be attending the conference and will gladly introduce you to their colleagues and collaborators.

It takes confidence and courage to meet people on your own. If you want to meet a specific person, do your homework ahead of time. Check homepages and websites so you will recognize individuals at the conference. Attend their presentation so that you are aware of their most recent and exciting research results. When you approach individuals, introduce yourself, tell them about your interests and the links to their research, and invite them to attend your presentation.

What are specialty group meetings and should one attend?

Specialty groups are excellent sources for networking. Specialty group meetings are like speed dating for academics - how else can you meet 50 people with similar research interests in less than an hour? These meetings are a great way to learn about funding opportunities and chances for students to become actively involved in professional development activities. And, the meetings are often followed by a social event – go, participate, and meet new people in your field.

How does one balance or manage their time at a conference? How many sessions should I attend?

How do I decide which to attend?

The schedule for the AAG is available online prior to the meeting. Identify and prioritize the most important and interesting sessions and presentations for you. Schedule some "down time" when you can visit the book and resource fair. Be aware of "information overload" - don't overload just before a special session or keynote address on your favorite topic.

How important is it to support ones fellow students?

The best way to support your fellow students happens before the conference. Coordinate a practice session and provide feedback to one another. The worst conference talks are those that have never been practiced in front of an audience. If you want to really do well, practice in front of your friends, take their constructive criticism seriously, and adjust your presentation based on their feedback. If you are very nervous, then practice more than once. At the meeting, be supportive of one another but be aware of becoming a conference clique. Be sure to meet new people as well as spending time with friends.

What is appropriate conference etiquette?

Be involved. Be professional. Be yourself. And have fun!

See you in Boston!

Lori Daniels, BSG President 2007-09

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Graduate Student Representative Columns

This being a transition year, we have two columns: Chad Lane's last and Jenn Marlon's first. Thanks, Chad, for doing a fantastic job, and congratulations Jenn!

After serving my term limit of two very enjoyable years as the student representative for the Biogeography Specialty Group (BSG), I just want to thank all of you for your incredible support! It has been a very exciting time for the BSG with record high memberships and budgets, increased grants and award totals, and the development of a new board position.

If you are a student, I truly hope you have already voted for the next student representative to be appointed at

the 2007 annual meeting of the AAG. We have three candidates running this year; Jenn Marlon, Zack Taylor, and Suzi Wiseman. All three of these candidates are well qualified for the job and have very diverse backgrounds. I also want to *strongly* encourage all students in the BSG to be sure and feel free to communicate with the new student representative, whoever it may be. The student representative is there to voice your opinions to the BSG board, so if there is anything you would like to see developed or changed, you should absolutely let them know.

Thanks to student requests in the last two years, we have had two panel sessions developed specifically for students. The first, a panel session at the 2006 annual meeting in Chicago, was designed to help students obtain jobs in biogeography. I personally feel that the panel was a great success and would love to see similar panels sessions organized in the future. The second, a panel session that has been organized for the 2007 annual meeting in San Francisco, is intended to help students and new faculty obtain grants for teaching and research.

While there has been an increase in the number of meeting sessions designed to help geographers obtain grants, this one will be specifically oriented towards biogeographers and I hope many of you can come. Panelists include Drs. Thomas Baerwald (NSF), David Butler (Texas State-San Marcos), Sally Horn (Tennessee), George Malanson (Iowa), and Rhea Presiado (Wisconsin-Platteville). As with the employment panel, I have tried to include panelists with a wide range of backgrounds so the session can be as helpful to as many of you as possible. The format of the session is very informal and is intended to be an open forum between the audience and panelists, so please bring your questions!

If there is anything else I can do before handing over the reins to the next student representative please do let me know. Also, if you have still not been added to the BSG student listserv let me know (clane6@utk.edu). Again, thank you all so very much for all of your support and enthusiasm over the last two years.

Chad Lane, Grad Student Rep, 2005-2007

As the new graduate student representative to the BSG, one of my primary responsibilities is to organize a session at the AAG to address current graduate student issues. Chad Lane organized a very successful session last year on grants, and another on employment the year before. This year, I received a wide variety of choices for topics, and so decided to go with a more general format for the session and call it simply "Succeeding as a Biogeographer," so it can include many different topics. The session is aimed at graduate students but will most likely be of interest to many early-career biogeographers as well. Topics may range from finding jobs, writing proposals and getting grants, to publishing, teaching, and other shared concerns. I plan to pull together a list of useful resources to hand out at the session as well, so if you have a few favorite websites or books, please email them to me!

Faculty members Dr. Jake Bendix (Syracuse University), Dr. David Cairns (Texas A&M University), Dr. Larry Handley (U.S. Geological Survey), Dr. Amy Hessel (West Virginia University), Dr. Colin Long (University of Wisconsin), and Dr. Rosemary Sherriff (University of Kentucky) have kindly agreed to serve as panelists. The panelists are at different stages of their careers, and will be able to provide perspectives from both inside and outside of academia. I am very grateful to them for volunteering their time, and I look forward to a lively discussion session in Boston! Hope to see you all there!

Jennifer Marlon, Grad Student Rep, 2007-2009

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BSG Business

BSG Annual Business Meeting: San Francisco

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Biogeography Specialty Group, Association of American Geographers, April 18, 2006, San Francisco, CA. Submitted by Taly Drezner, Secretary-Treasurer

Welcome

Joy Mast, President of the BSG, opened the meeting at 7:12pm. She noted that the BSG has over 500 members and promoted the AAG's new 5 minute interactive sessions.

SESSIONS: This year, 40 sessions were sponsored or co-sponsored by the BSG. Members are encouraged to come up with ideas for sessions for next year's meeting in Boston as well as any field trip ideas.

LISTSERV: We replaced the old BSG listserv with the AAG's forum set up for BSG.

WEBSITE: <http://people.cas.sc.edu/kupfer/bsg.html>. This is presently under John Kupfer's, web page and he is the organizer. He requested syllabi to post online for biogeography courses to help new faculty.

Cowles Award

Joy thanked Catherine Yansa for organizing, as both thanked the judges. Catherine presented the 2007 winners of the Henry Cowles Excellence in Publishing award in Biogeography, to John Kupfer, George Malanson and Scott Franklin, entitled *Not seeing the ocean for the islands: the mediating influence of matrix-based processes on forest fragmentation effects*. John Kupfer was not present, and the plaque was presented to George Malanson. George thanked the committee and the Biogeography Specialty Group, and discussed how much he enjoyed with working with some of his former graduate students.

Student Research Grant Awards

Joy introduced and thanked Charles Lafon for organizing, and Charles thanked all of the reviewers for their good critical comments. Charles presented the winners and offered congratulations, including two awards for the tie in the Ph.D. category:

Masters: Sarah McLane of the University of South Carolina for *An integrated approach to modeling invasive species as a part of a watershed management partnership in the Kohala Mountains, Hawaii* (\$500)

Ph.D.: Grant Elliott (University of Minnesota) for *Spatiotemporal influences of climate on upper treeline dynamics along a latitudinal gradient in the Rocky Mountains, USA* (\$1000).

Ph.D.: Daehyun Kim (Texas A & M) for *Spatial zonation of vegetation on a salt marsh ecosystem: implications of micro-spatial scale processes and land use history* (\$1000)

Student Presentation Awards

Joy introduced Jim Speer, who noted that 8 M.A. and 10 Ph.D. students applied this year for the best paper awards, as well as 2 undergraduate applications for the best poster. Jim noted that the best poster is open to graduate students as well, it just happened that the two applications were from undergraduates. This year's winners cannot be announced as judging is still in progress but they will be announced next year. Jim thanked the judges for their work. Jim presented winners from last year's competition and thanked the students:

Masters: Chelsea Teale of Syracuse University for *Holey ground: the distribution and status of earthworm populations in Yukon Territory, Canada*.

Ph.D.: K. Anchukaitis of the University of Arizona for *Calibrating annual isotope chronologies in *Ocotea tenera* (Lauraceae) from the Monteverde Cloud Forest, Costa Rica*.

BSG Elections

Joy thanked Rosemary Sherriff who organized and coordinated the 2007 BSG board elections. The new board members were invited to the board meeting held earlier today. Joy thanked Jim Speer and Charles Lafon for serving the last 2 years and thanked those that are willing to serve. Congratulations to all of the winners!

Rosemary announced the winners:

The new graduate student representative: Jennifer Marlon (University of Oregon)

Two new board members: Henri Grissino-Mayer (University of Tennessee) and Michelle Goman (Cornell University).

The new president: Lori Daniels (University of British Columbia)

New Graduate Representative

Joy thanked Chad Lane for his service and for getting the BSG student listserv up and running. Graduate students that wish to be added may email him. Joy noted that Chad did a great job putting together this year's grant-writing session. Chad noted it was great and thanked the panelists who participated in that session. Let

Chad or the new grad representative know if you have any ideas for sessions for next year or let him know if you'd like to get onto the graduate student listserv.

BSG Finances and Treasurer's Report

Joy thanked Taly Drezner for serving as BSG Treasurer. Taly presented the treasurer's report (attached). The funding for the student research grant awards for this year is two \$1000 awards for the Ph.D. and one \$500 for the Masters. The best M.A. and Ph.D. and poster presentations are set at \$200 each. In addition, the BSG provides \$500 to the graduate student representative on the board for support for travel to the AAG annual meeting.

BSG Newsletter

Joy thanked Editor Duane Griffin for all of his work on the BSG newsletter, located at:
http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/geography/The_Biogeographer/

Duane asked that any materials of interest to be sent to him to add to the newsletter. Duane has returned from England and the next newsletter should be out relatively soon. Duane said he can provide instructions to help him with submissions. Please send him any submissions! They are strongly encouraged.

Discussion for BSG

BSG members are invited to share their hopes for the future of the specialty group and their concerns. How might the Biogeography Specialty Group move into new growth and better serve our membership?

The International Biogeography Society

Joy Mast promoted attendance to the IBS in January 2009 in the Yucatan. The last meeting was in the Canary Islands in January and was very good (although only 6 BSG members were able to attend the 300+ person meeting). This is an excellent organization made up of ca. 500 biogeographers (primarily of biologists). North American geographers are notably underrepresented, despite Glen MacDonald from UCLA being instrumental in getting it going and Jack Williams from UW Madison starting a role as secretary on the IBS board. Vicki Funk (IBS president) and Joy Mast have been brainstorming on bringing in BSG speakers for the 2009 symposiums, and Joy has written a guest column for the IBS newsletter inviting their members to BSG sessions at upcoming AAGs. Joy will also introduce the IBS in her spring column. There are no overlapping sessions; there are five symposia on big theory themes; the rest are poster sessions. Mary Ann Cunningham noted that members get a free access online for many biogeography journals online, and attending meetings provides an opportunity to learn about new aspects of biogeography like evolutionary biology. Duane Griffin noted that biologists are happy to have geographers and also noted the exposure to new ideas and connections at the annual meeting.

Syllabi

Send syllabi for biogeography classes to Charles Lafon (clafon@geog.tamu.edu).

Annals and Physical Geography Submissions

George Malanson encouraged people to send physical geography papers to the Annals and to Physical Geography.

Landscape Ecology Workshop

Michael DeMers mentioned that in Tucson there is a half day workshop on teaching landscape ecology and about resources for new faculty.

Discussion about BSG Finances

One suggestion was made to put money towards helping students doing international travel to facilitate international research.

Sally Horn suggested more runner-up awards for awards we already have.

Taly Drezner, BSG Treasurer, described the financial situation in more detail; we have a large build-up of money from previous years which we need to draw down (and AAG discourages large balances). Our

spending this year for awards is greater than our net intake, so we are drawing down our finances, but not very quickly. It was suggested that 1 M.A. and 1 Ph.D. award are given each year, but perhaps in some years we may give two.

George Malanson supported the idea that we give more to international students, being flexible from year to year.

Joy called the motion; seconded? Jacob Bendix said he prefers to award money for research rather than student travel.

Joy Mast suggested that we could cover the \$20 membership to the AAG for students in third world countries (now a special AAG deal). Sally Horn suggested we might cover the \$7.50 membership dues for some members. Jim Speer suggested a competitive award for research grants and that we put the money in a pool like the NSF. Charles Lafon said that there have been problems with not enough Master students turning in applications, and suggested we push the deadline back for more Masters students to finish working out, writing and submitting their ideas. The audience showed strong agreement.

Jim Speer offered his second suggestion which was to pay the IBS membership (of \$35) for students. Sally Horn thought money going to student awards would be better. Lori Daniels commented that it would take several years to draw down the funds even with increased awards. David Cairns said that while we have a surplus to spend down, we are already overspending at present as the Treasurer, Taly Drezner, had discussed earlier. Sally Horn suggested that we decide in advance how many awards per year that year's budget will allow, and offer that many.

Joy Mast called the question: Spending the money more on research grants and more for international travel at the discretion of the board, for both Ph.D. and M.A. students. In essence, the board would fund students as we can per year. The motion passed.

Announcements:

Physical Geographers Reception

The annual physical geography party will be held Friday night, from 8-midnight in the Imperial A room of the Hilton. The BSG co-sponsors this party, which includes generous amounts of free beer, sodas, and snacks. It is open to everyone at the AAG meeting, so bring your friends.

BSG Social

Following the business meeting, Joy Mast invited all members to meet at John Foley's Irish House Pub at 243 O'Farrell Street) one block from the conference hotel.

Session Organizers

Please use the web and listserv for discussing different sessions for next year's AAG and for organizing sessions.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01pm to John Foley's Irish House Pub (one block away on 243 O'Farrell Street) for some fellowship and good cheer.

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Awards

Cowles Award: Best Publication in 2006

The Henry Cowles Excellence in Publishing in Biogeography for 2006 was awarded to **John Kupfer, George Malanson and Scott Franklin**, for their 2006 article: Not seeing the ocean for the islands: the mediating influence of matrix-based processes on forest fragmentation effects, published in *Global Ecology and Biogeography* Vol. 15, pages 8-20.

Student Awards

Student Research Grant Awards

This year's master's student research grant goes to **Sarah McLane** (University of South Carolina; \$500).

We had a tie for the Ph.D. student grant, so **Grant Elliott** (University of Minnesota) and **Daehyun Kim** (Texas A & M) were each awarded \$1000.

Student Presentation Awards

Chad Yost (St. Cloud State University) won the master's student paper award (\$200) for his presentation "Diagnostic phytolith evidence for the presence and abundance of wild rice (*Zizania* sp.) from central Minnesota lake sediments."

Neil Toth (Indiana State University) won the \$100 master's student poster award for his presentation "Climate reconstruction from eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) in central Indiana."

As with the research grants, there was a tie for the Ph.D. paper presentation award (\$200). The winners are:

Ryan Danby (University of Alberta) was awarded \$200 for his paper "Plant Physiology Influences Landscape Pattern at Subarctic Alpine Treeline;" and

Scott Markwith (University of Georgia) for "Multi-Scale Analysis of *Hymenocallis coronaria* Genetic Diversity, Genetic Structure, and Gene Movement Under the Influence of Unidirectional Stream Flow."

Congratulations to John, George, Scott, Sarah, Daehyun, Chad, Neil, Ryan, and Scott!

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Calls for Nominations and Participation

Nominations for Cowles and Parsons Awards

Please consider submitting nominations for the Henry Cowles Award for Excellence in Publication and the James J. Parsons Distinguished Career Award. To submit a nomination for the Cowles Award, please simply send the name of the person and the name of their paper/book. To nominate a person for the Parsons Award, send a short letter of nomination stating some of the candidate's most significant achievements. Please submit nominations by March 1, 2008. Information can be submitted via snail mail, e-mail or fax to:

Dr. Catherine H. Yansa
Department of Geography
Michigan State University
227 Geography Building
East Lansing, MI 48824-1117

Ph.: 517-353-3910
Fax: 517-432-1671
E-mail: yansa@msu.edu

BSG Board Nominations

Please nominate candidates for two new BSG board members to serve from June 2008 to June 2010. Please send nominations to Rosemary Sherriff by February 7, 2008.

Rosemary Sherriff
Dept. of Geography
University of Kentucky
1571 Patterson Office Tower
Lexington, KY 40506

Phone 859/257-6057
Fax 859/323-1969
email: rsherriff@uky.edu

BSG 2008 Student Research Grants

The aim of the Biogeography Specialty Group (BSG) graduate student research grant competition is to provide partial support for graduate students to conduct quality biogeographic research projects for their Master's thesis or doctoral dissertation. The awards are competitive, and proposals are judged individually on the basis of: 1) scientific merit of the project, including biogeographic significance of the research question and quality of the methodology; 2) organization and clarity of the proposal; and 3) qualifications of the student to conduct the proposed work. Each applicant must be a student member of the AAG, and the proposed project should be part of her/his thesis or dissertation research. Normally, awards are made to one Master's and one doctoral student each year. Applicants may join the AAG now and become eligible for the grants competition if not already a student member. A committee of four biogeographers from different institutions will evaluate the proposals. Applications must be **postmarked or electronically transmitted (preferred) by April 1, 2008**. Announcement of the awards will be made at the BSG business meeting at the AAG Annual Meeting in Chicago.

THE APPLICATION FORM AND ABSTRACT MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 1, 2008.

[Application instructions and form \(MS Word format\)](#)

Henri D. Grissino-Mayer
Department of Geography
1000 Phillip Fulmer Way
The University of
Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee
37996

grissino@utk.edu
865-974-6029

2008 Biogeography Specialty Group Student and Poster Awards

The Biogeography Specialty Group sponsors three annual awards to encourage student participation in the annual meeting and to recognize outstanding student research. Competition for the award is open to undergraduate and graduate students (including those receiving their Ph.D. within a year after the dissertation defense).

Award Categories

Undergraduate/Master student paper (\$200)

Ph.D. student paper (\$200)

Best poster (\$100)

The student must be either the sole author or the primary author of the paper, and must be the presenter at the meeting. Illustrated posters are eligible for the award and will be grouped within the appropriate paper competition (not the poster competition).

Judging criteria include: the significance and originality of the research question, the creativity and the quality of the methodology, the validity of the conclusions drawn from the results and the clarity of the presentation.

If you wish to be considered for the award, please [email](#) the application form and a copy of the abstract submitted to AAG to Michelle Goman.

Email: mgoman@cornell.edu

The application form and abstract must be received by January 31st, 2008.

[Application instructions and form \(MS Word format\)](#)

Confirmation of receipt of your application will be sent by email.

Dr Michelle Goman
Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences
Cornell University

THE APPLICATION FORM AND ABSTRACT MUST BE RECEIVED BY JANUARY 31, 2008.

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News

Boston AAG

BSG-Sponsored Sessions

As of October 17, the following topics had been proposed as BSG sponsored sessions. For the complete listing, search the online 2008 program at the AAG web site (check "specialty group" and enter "biogeography").

Advances in Paleoclimatology

Wildfires in a changing environment: How much worse could it get

Succeeding as a Biogeographer

Vegetation of Eastern North America

Vegetation Dynamics

Quaternary Environments of the Americas

Species Distribution Modeling Roundtable

Treeline Ecotones

Species Ranges - Patterns in Space and Time

Dendrochronology Sessions: Dendroclimatology, Dendroecology, Isotope Dendrochronology, Illustrated

Paper Session on Dendrochronology

Taking the "Voodoo" out of Science: Improving Stakeholder-Science Communications (Interactive Short Papers)

Biogeography and Remote Sensing: Linking species, landscape and regional scales.

Vegetation Change in the Upper Midwest

Studying Land Use Change: Determining the Environmental Impacts of Sprawl

Illustrated Poster Session on Biogeography

Geographic Contributions to Agro-biodiversity Conservation

Something you don't want to miss while you're in Boston

[The Harvard Museum of Natural History](#). In particular, don't miss the [The Ware Collection of Glass Models of Plants](#), which is one of the most remarkable things you'll ever see.

International Biogeography Society

Joy Nystrom Mast
Carthage College

Greetings fellow biogeographers. As we look forward to meeting together again for the annual AAG national meeting, I'd like to take the opportunity to share my ponderings on another group of biogeographers. For reference, the Biogeography Specialty Group is one of the largest specialty groups in the AAG with about 500 members. I would like to introduce to you another similar-sized group of biogeographers that I have had the pleasure to interact with since the group's inception in 2000. I am speaking of the International Biogeography Society (IBS).

The IBS was formed by a diverse group of researchers, including geographers Glen MacDonald and Robert Whittaker and biologists James Brown, Mark V. Lomolino, Brett R. Riddle, Dov Sax, and Julio Betancourt. The mission of the IBS is three-fold: (1) Foster communication and collaboration between biogeographers in disparate academic fields - scientists who would otherwise have little opportunity for substantive interaction and collaboration; (2) Increase both the awareness and interests of the scientific community and the lay public in the contributions of biogeographers; and (3) Promote the training and education of biogeographers so that they may develop sound strategies for studying and conserving the world's biota.

The meetings for the IBS occur every other year in early January. The goal is to make the society truly international in membership and in meeting locations. Thus far, we have met twice in the United States (Nevada and West Virginia) and once in Africa (Canary Islands off of Morocco). The next meeting (Jan 2009) will take place in Mérida, Mexico, on the Yucatan Peninsula.

What makes these conferences different from attending BSG sessions at the national AAG meeting is the meetings are based around five non-overlapping symposia, featuring 5 speakers each, with the rest of the 100s of participants presenting posters. These poster sessions are given prime time slots for discussing one's research with others. There are also field trips before and during the meeting that are included as part of the conference.

The first conference in 2003 was based on the five symposium themes of Dynamics of Diversity, Paleobiogeography, Phylogeography and Diversification, Biogeography of the Sea, and Biogeography Theory and Conservation Practice. The 2005 conference included non-overlapping symposia on Biogeography of Exotic Species, Geography of Parasites and Infectious Diseases, Biogeographic Responses to Global Change, Geography of Extinctions, and Biogeography and Ecological Impacts of Human Civilizations. The recent 2007 meeting in the Canaries focused on Ecogeographic "Rules", Quaternary Impacts on Holarctic Biogeography, Island Biogeography, Maritime Connectivity, and Separating Historical from Environmental Effects on Species Distributions. This international meeting was attended by biogeographers from more than 27 nations (5 continents).

Currently, the IBS meetings are primarily attended by biogeographers who are housed in biology departments. The IBS does have a geographer serving on its board for 2007-09 (Jack Williams from UW-Madison). I talked with the incoming president of the IBS, Vicki Funk, at the Canary Islands meeting about ways to increase "geographers" participation in the society, especially as symposium speakers. She is hopeful that more BSG members will also be active in the International Biogeography Society. One suggestion we discussed was to have a symposium in the 2009 IBS Yucatan meeting by geographers, or having a geographer as one of the 5 speakers in each of the 5 symposia. We can discuss these and other possibilities at the upcoming BSG business meeting in April. Similar to this column, I am writing a column for the IBS newsletter to introduce the Biogeography Specialty Group, especially to those biologists who have never attended an AAG national meeting.

I encourage you to consider expanding your professional memberships to include the International Biogeography Society (<http://www.biogeography.org>). IBS membership is only \$40.00 per year (\$30.00 per year for students). In addition to supporting the society, becoming a member of IBS provides several advantages: 1) the opportunity to participate in international meetings of the Society, 2) discounts on books published in association with IBS, 3) free online access to Blackwell Publishing's three biogeography journals: [Journal of Biogeography](#), [Global Ecology & Biogeography](#), [Diversity & Distributions](#), and [Ecography](#), and 4) 20% discount on additional Blackwell Publishing journals [Oikos](#) and [Journal of Avian Biology](#). Overall, the IBS is a wonderful way to meet fellow biogeographers throughout the world from many other academic disciplines.

-- Joy Nystrom Mast, BSG President 2005-07

This article is actually Joy Mast's final President's Column. Mary Ann Cunningham also attended the meeting in Tenerife. See her Research Notes article below. In addition to the benefits listed above, membership fees allow the IBS to offer free travel and lodging for meetings to select students and discounts to faculty. —Ed.

For more information on the society, visit the [IBS home page](#).

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Member News

David Butler

Texas State University

Recent Graduate Student Completions

Doctoral:

- Fenda A. Akiwumi, 2006, “Environmental and Social Change in Southwestern Sierra Leone : Timber Extraction (1838-1898) and Rutile Mining (1967-2005)”.
- Dawna L. Cerney, 2006. “Assessment of Landscape Change in Waterton Lakes National Park, Canada, Using Multitemporal Composites Constructed from Terrestrial Repeat Photographs”.

Master's:

- Michelle Bussemey, 2007. “Analysis of Landscape Change of the Rio Vista Dam in San Marcos , Texas .
- Shelia A. Henk, 2007. “Comparing Press Responses to *Sus scrofa* in Great Britain and the United States .
- John M. Wamsley, 2007. “Environmental Factors Affecting the Relationship Between the Texas Horned Lizard and the Introduced Red Fire Ant”.
- Ellen A. Cagle, 2006. “Evaluating the Geomorphological Role of Feral Hogs (*Sus Scrofa*) in Golden-Cheeked Warbler Habitat”.

Recent Honors

- Presidential Award for Excellence in Scholarly/Creative Activities, Texas State University , 2007
- Scholarly/Creative Activity Golden Apple Award, College of Liberal Arts , Texas State University, 2007
- Top Reviewer Award, *Catena*, 2007
- Distinguished Scholar Award, James and Marilyn Lovell Center for Environmental Geography and Hazards Research, Texas State University , 2007
- Presidential Seminar Award, Texas State University , 2006
- Distinguished Career Award, Mountain Geography Special Group, Association of American Geographers, 2006

Donald Jonson has been leading an enviably active and relaxing life of late. [Click here](#) for a full account.

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Recent Publications

Submitting author highlighted in **bold**.

- Akiwumi, F.A., and **D.R. Butler**, 2007. Mining and environmental change in Sierra Leone , west Africa: a remote sensing and hydrogeomorphological study. *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment* doi 10.1007/s10661-007-9930-9.
- Baker, W.L., **T.T. Veblen** and R.L. Sherriff. 2007. Fire, fuels, and restoration of ponderosa pine-Douglas-fir forests in the Rocky Mountains, USA . *Journal of Biogeography* 34:251-269.
- Butler, D.R.** 2006. Human-induced changes in animal populations and distributions, and their subsequent effects on fluvial systems. *Geomorphology* 79(3-4), 448-459.
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Research Notes

Why not publish in *Science*?

Mary Ann Cunningham

Vassar College

One of the later symposia at the Tenerife meeting was a panel discussion about Biogeography and Public Awareness. Public outreach is an explicit goal of the IBS, with the purpose of both strengthening the field and contributing to conservation solutions. On the panel were Andrew Sugden, editor for ecology at *Science*, Richard Ladle of Oxford University Center for the Environment, and Vicki Funk of the National Museum of Natural History. Some of the messages in this session may be of value to geographers in general. Here is a brief synopsis of some of the ideas in that discussion.

Prominent journals such as *Science* or *Nature* are always interested in publishing new research in ecology. It's true that ecology-oriented topics get relatively few pages in *Science*, compared to genomics and astrophysics, but those pages could be yours. Biogeography has particular potential to get public attention because it is explicitly oriented toward issues such as conservation and climate change that have broad relevance and appeal. A key obstacle that Andrew Sugden sees is the problem of academic language. He stressed that scientists need to write in ways that communicate the *romance* of their work, as well as demonstrating its broad scientific implications. He insisted that there is always an appetite for stories of discovery, or of novelty. The public is curious and hungry for new and interesting ideas, he said.

A key problem in communicating with the public is that academics tend not to promote their ideas on campus or in local papers. Sugden suggested having a short version of your work prepared for public consumption, a press release ready to go, when you submit to a major journal. This is a good way to help communicate to the public about the work you think is so interesting and valuable. Richard Ladle pointed out that one of the tasks with this public information is that the public often has little background knowledge. Antonio Macado, editor of the *Journal for Nature Conservation*, suggested that a good strategy for overcoming this problem, and for gaining public attention, is to explicitly link your work to something the public already cares about. If your work provides insights or has relevance for economics, health, familiar environmental topics, dancing penguins (just kidding), then exploit those links if they help you get your message out. A few years ago Henri

Grissino-Mayer demonstrated this principal when he gained international fame and glory for dating a violin, and then a historic (but not very historic) log cabin. A public already fascinated by Stradivarius or colonial history is quick to be intrigued by the novelty of using dendrochronology to learn more about their artifacts.

Vicki Funk of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, and new president of the IBS, said that cooperation with museums can be a useful way of communicating with the public. Many colleges and universities have museums that are happy to collaborate in developing exhibits, and these can give visibility to your work, your department, your students, or your favorite applied or theoretical cause. There were also, of course, suggestions about making web pages and keeping, or participating in, blogs (for those who have time for this sort of thing), or putting your work on GoogleEarth.

Finally, Dov Sax commented that one of the roots of the IBS was a discussion that he and Jim Brown and others had had about David Quammen's *Song of the Dodo*. Dov Sax asked, why could Quammen communicate the basic themes of biogeography so much more clearly than any of the biogeographers' papers he read had done? The obvious answers, of course, are that Quammen is a better writer than most of us, and he writes for a different audience than most of us do. But it was an interesting challenge.

Being able to write for major journals and writing for the public aren't the same thing, but both involve imagining a wider public audience than most of us usually write for. Communicating with the public isn't necessary for academic success or for promotion and tenure. Some of us tend to assume that writing for a wider audience will get in the way of our more important academic work. But if we want to see our discipline growing stronger, visibility is useful. And if we could all write as well as David Quammen (or John McPhee for geologists), it would be nice for us to read, as well as for a larger readership. Probably few geographers in grad school are taught that they should write either for *Science* or like Quammen. At least I don't recall these discussions in the grad lounge. But perhaps it wouldn't be a bad thing for the discipline if tried more than we do.

As a final note, on my return from the Canaries, I found an email from a colleague suggesting that we send a manuscript—nearly completed to submit to *Ecology*—to *Science*. Even though I know there's a minute acceptance rate (I suspect the frequency of publication is really small for geographers), and even though the paper was already *that close* to being done, the process of tightening the paper and clarifying it for a wider audience was a great exercise. The good thing about *Science* is that the rejection letter should come pretty quickly, and then we can turn around and send it somewhere else. Or who knows, maybe I'd better start working on that press release.

Mary Ann wrote back to say that her paper was rejected "on the grounds that it was too narrow. But it only took a day to get the response, so I had it out the door again a few days later. I'm still glad I tried." She also pointed to [Jack Williams's recent paper in the Proceedings of the National Academies of Science](#) as an example of exactly what she's talking about. —Ed.

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Course Notes

New Biogeography Field Course

Rhea Presiado

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

The University of Wisconsin, Platteville is initiating a new geography field course for summer 2008 based at the University of South Pacific in Suva, Fiji. The course, "Tropical Marine Ecosystems" will focus on the coastal biogeography, geomorphology, oceanography, and biology of the coastal marine ecosystems in and around Fiji. Dr. Rhea Presiado, Assistant Professor of Geography at UW Platteville, will be co-teaching the course with faculty and staff from USP. Students at any university are eligible to enroll in this summer course for geography course credits. Please email Dr. Presiado at presiaador@uwplatt.edu for information on this exciting geography field course.



Coral Reef off of Taveuni Island, Fiji. Photo by R. Presiado.

Field Trip Safety

Duane Griffin

Bucknell University

Field experience is critical to education in physical geography. Naturally, it involves risks. Your institution may have field safety policies or standard operating procedures, or you may be left to develop your own. My university has no standard policy, so I've adopted a set of common-sense procedures based on what I'd want if my own kids were on a trip. I tell our administrative assistant where we're going and take a cell phone and basic first aid kit. I tell students to wear sturdy and closed footwear and how to avoid getting into trouble with gravity, running water, poison ivy, and animals we might see if we're lucky (bears, snakes, and porcupines) and those they won't see unless they look really hard (ticks). I supplement these general tips with location-specific instructions as appropriate. All of this seemed to work just fine. I've led over 100 field trips, mostly in the Appalachian forests, but also to sites ranging from alpine glaciers to ocean beaches without a single accident or incident until last October, when wasps attacked my class during a visit to an old growth hemlock forest.

I've never saw a reason to include bees and wasps in my safety talk. They're common on our campus, I've never seen a single wasp in the thousand-plus hours I've spent working in the Appalachian forests, and I've never known them to attack unprovoked. This year, however, some combination of a mild winter, dry summer, and freakishly late autumn prompted eastern yellow jackets to expand from the lowland areas where they are common into the mountain forests, where they are not. The first nest we found was at our first stop, a fallen giant with a rotting stump that the wasps had moved into and defended with fury.

In the span of about three minutes, we accumulated over fifty stings (one woman got a whopping sixteen hits). Fortunately, the only student with a bee allergy didn't get stung, and nobody twisted and ankle, slipped, or tripped during the panicked exit from the site, and we were able to avoid getting attacked at the other nests we saw on our long detour back to the bus.

All in all, we got off pretty easy. The field trip was a bust, discomfort from the stings lasted about a week, fear of another attack kept students distracted on subsequent trips, and I lost a fair bit of sleep envisioning students with broken legs and bleeding heads going into anaphalactic shock on the trail. But that was all. We were lucky.



You gotta know when to hold 'em, fold 'em, walk away, and run. The shot's blurry because wasp nest #3 is right behind me.



Finally, the safety of the bus. But guess what was on the bus? Wasps.

The wasp incident prompted me to rethink my approach to trip safety and to do some web research to find out what other folks do. The best single source of information I found was the [Science Education Resource Center \(SERC\)](#) at Carleton College. This is an excellent site (tons of pedagogical information that should be especially useful to new faculty or anybody looking to revamp an Earth Science course) that includes two safety-related resources.

The first includes two brief pages on [What Students Should Wear](#) and [Safety Considerations](#), part of the [Starting Point: Teaching Entry-Level Geoscience](#) portion of their site. Second, SERC also hosts a number of web sites for the National Association of Geoscience Teachers, including a more extensive resource called [Playing It Safe: Recognizing and Managing Risk When Working With Students in the Field](#), by Barbara and David Tewksbury of Hamilton College. This site is organized around a series of questions ranging from "Are your students adequately equipped?" and "Do your students know what to do in an emergency?," to "Do you carry personal liability insurance?" with helpful information for each topic. The last question, together with the [Field Safety Resources](#) page (samples of policies and forms in use at Hamilton). A third resource is Ian West's [field safety page for his Geology of the Dorset Coast](#). Even if you don't have to worry about "trapping in mud" or "wshing of persons into the sea," it's a good example of thorough consideration of hazards based on long experience in one of the world's truly great field trip settings.

Based on what I learned, here's what will I do differently next year:

1. Expand my safety lecture and put it in the form of a written safety guide that will be the basis for an extensive quiz that students will have to pass with a 100% score before being allowed to go on field trips.
2. No student will be allowed on the bus without adequate footwear and long, loose-fitting clothing. I've always recommended this and made it clear that students are responsible for the consequences of the sartorial choices they make. But no more of that. Thanks to its periglacial Ice Age heritage, our corner of the Appalachians is surfaced with a mantle of perfect ankle-breaking size sandstone and quartzite boulders. And once the stinging began, students just *ran*. It really is a wonder nobody got hurt (much), especially since at least one student was wearing flip-flops. Similarly, the men in the class suffered less than the women because they favor baggy clothing that kept the stingers away from skin. Women wearing close-fitting clothing suffered most.
3. The safety guide will also include a section on the importance of remaining calm, and the first trip will include practice moving quickly but carefully down a trail. Aside from the boulders, we were fortunate

that the wasp attack happened on a fairly level stretch of straight trail along a valley bottom. Not all of our destinations are so panic-friendly. I'll also implement a buddy system and designate a student to be in charge of the group if something were to happen to me.

4. I'll have students fill out a [medical form](#) at the beginning of the semester and bring them on each trip (cumbersome, but critical in an emergency). Students with allergies will be required to keep an epi-pen in the first aid kit for the duration of the field season.
5. Update my first aid training. It's been a long time. I'm overdue.

I'll also be raising the issue of field trip safety and faculty liability through our faculty Personnel Committee. I hate the prospect of piles of paperwork and burdensome policies that this may bring, but after this incident, it seems a wise thing to do.

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Field Notes

Michelle Goman
Cornell University



Last June I spent a fabulous week at Celestun Lagoon, Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico collecting sediment cores with a group from Stanford. The goal of this project is to reconstruct mid-late Holocene salinity within the lagoon and establish associated vegetation changes. Although I spent much of my time in mangrove swamps swatting mosquitoes, I had a great time and the spectacular flocks of flamingos were an added bonus.

David Butler, George Malanson, and Steve Walsh

During the latter half of July, David Butler, George Malanson, and Steve Walsh conducted field work on alpine treeline in Washington state, under the auspices of the USGS Biological Resources Division's Western Mountain Initiative (WMI). They examined biogeographic and geomorphic conditions at treeline sites in Olympic, Mt. Rainier, and North Cascades National Park. Olympic and North Cascades are primary field sites in the WMI project, along with Sierra/Kings Canyon, Glacier, and Rocky Mountain National Parks. Dave, George, and Steve carried out fieldwork at treeline in Rocky Mountain in 2005, and in Sierra/Kings Canyon and Yosemite National Parks in 2006. The summer of 2008 will see a return to their favorite stomping grounds, Glacier National Park.

Joanne E. Stewart
University of Denver

In 2003 and 2004, I surveyed bats using mist nets and acoustic monitoring along the Missouri River in eastern Montana. The survey was part of my Master's thesis research studying landscape influences on bat spatial

activity patterns along a prairie riparian corridor at multiple spatial scales. The BSG graduate student research award was used to purchase field equipment. This project was also funded by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Data analysis was recently completed and demonstrated that bats utilize riparian forest edge habitat significantly more than other habitat types along the river corridor. Strong relationships were found between bat spatial activity patterns along the river and habitat heterogeneity and the percent of forested habitat at the 2 km buffer scale. Species detections also resulted in the expansion of the known range for several bat species in eastern Montana. Portions of this research will be presented at the AAG conference this coming spring.



Townsend's big-eared bat, Montana state species of concern, captured in a mist net.



Missouri River Breaks on the Charles M. Rus Wildlife Refuge, eastern Montana.

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Miscellaneous Notes

Special Offer

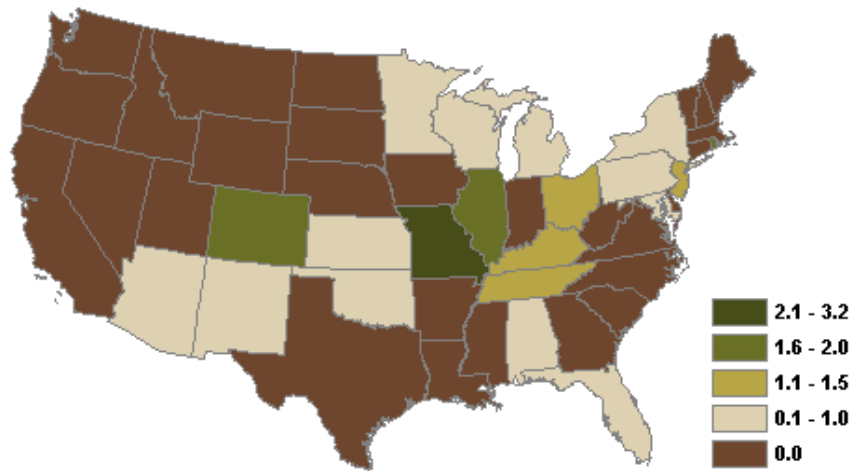


Looking for a great gift? How about these newly minted “Bowling with the BSG Presidents” collectibles! Similar to old fashioned bobbleheads, these new ‘Pinheads’ feature all of your favorite BSG presidents from past and present. That’s right, now you can have Lori Daniels, Ken Young, Sally Horn and the rest of the gang sitting right there on your desk while you work on your next biogeographic masterpiece. Order now before it’s too late

Editor's note: John Kupfer claims to have nothing to do with this. For orders and inquiries contact Kupfer@gwm.sc.edu

Map

Biogeomortality: Reptile Revenge



Mortality rate (per 100,000 people) for being bitten or struck by reptiles, 1999-2004. Data Source: CDC Compressed Mortality 1999-2004 ICD-10 113 Codes W58 and W59 (wonder.cdc.gov). Map by D. Griffin.

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Editor's Note

Thanks to everybody who contributed materials to the newsletter. Production this time around wasn't without it's share of snafus, so if you sent something and are wondering what happened to it, please let me know and

I'll add it to the spring issue. Contributions to the newsletter reflect the fact that the BSG continues to grow more vibrant and lively each year, and each issue seems to be a little more complicated to put together than the last. All of which has made the effort to recover from my absence last year all the more challenging. With the combined Fall-Spring 2006 issue and the slightly late publication of the fall 2007 issue, we're now caught up.

Barring any surprises, the spring '08 edition will appear after the Boston AAG meeting, and *The Biogeographer* will be returned to its normal publication schedule. To help keep it on that schedule, I'm trying to streamline the assembly process. Ideally, I'll be able to work with our tech people to set up a submission form, rather than relying on email. In the meantime, I've standardized the [submissions guidelines](#) and added them as a permanent feature at the end of the newsletter. At the BSG Business Meeting in Boston, I'll propose some fundamental changes to further streamline newsletter production by using our communication technologies to disseminate BSG-related information more efficiently and effectively.

As always, I encourage everybody to submit material for the next issue.

See you all in Boston, and have a great 2008.

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Submission Guidelines

Submissions should be sent directly to the editor as email attachments in one of the following formats: html, MS Word, or RTF (single spaced, 12 pt. Times Roman font). Limit special formatting to bold and italics, ensuring that all links are complete and any subfolders or documents are included. If submitting items for more than one section of the newsletter (news, notes, publications), send each in a separate email with the section identified in the subject line. Bear in mind that your editor generally just cuts and pastes whatever he gets, so please spell-check and proofread your submissions carefully. Submissions should be concise and written in a style consistent with the rest of the newsletter.

Notes and News Items. News items can be personal, departmental, institutional, or simply biogeography-related stories from the press. Notes are intended to convey topical information of interest to the BSG community. Topics for these categories include:

- Research Notes: new projects and progress reports or general research-related ideas and issues.
- Field Notes: recent field work or field trips or retellings of classic tales from the field (embellishments welcome).
- Course Notes: news, announcements, or articles related to teaching biogeography or pedagogical issues affecting the discipline.
- Book Notes: book reviews or announcements.
- Miscellaneous Notes: anything that doesn't fit in any of the other categories.

News items should generally be less than 500 words and notes less than 1500. Please check with the editor before submitting longer items. Images should be sent as separate files (do not embed them in text documents) following the guidelines below.

Recent Publications

Format bibliographic entries following the Chicago B style used in the Annals. Only publications that have actually appeared in print or online will be listed, so please do not submit in-press items until you have page numbers or a permanent URL.

Images

Photos should be jpeg or png format with a minimum resolution of and no larger than 400 pixels wide or tall. Larger images (up to 800 pixels wide) will be considered if appropriate. Maps and other graphics can be larger if needed for clarity, but in no case should exceed 800 pixels wide. Edit your images to enhance contrast, brightness, and color balance. ([Picasa](#) is a free image organizer that includes basic editing tools that can simplify this task; be sure to use the "Export" command after editing.)

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