

**AAG Hazards Specialty Group
Annual Business Meeting Minutes
New York Hilton Hotel, New York City
February 26, 2012**

1. Thomas Cova, specialty group chair, called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM with 28 members in attendance. The agenda for the meeting and the minutes of the 2011 business meeting of the specialty group were distributed.
2. John Cross moved approval (Ronald Hagelman seconded) of the agenda as distributed. Passed unanimously.
3. Anya Butt moved (Phil Chaney seconded) approval of the 2011 business meeting minutes as distributed. Passed unanimously.
4. Cova presented the Specialty Group Chair's Report. The specialty group now has 314 paid members, with the decline in numbers attributed to the fact that some members had not renewed their AAG membership in keeping with deadlines established by the new knowledge community software being utilized by the AAG Central Office. The specialty group sponsored 12 sessions during the New York meeting, down from 21 in Seattle last year. The need for the specialty group to do a better job in diverting hazards and disaster papers that are submitted to the AAG program committee into sessions organized by the specialty group was mentioned. This should hopefully reduce the number of papers scheduled in simultaneous sessions. There were 77 papers in the meeting program with the keyword "hazard" and 44 with the keyword "disaster."
5. Cova related several items from the Specialty Group Chairs meeting: (a) the New York meeting is the largest AAG meeting, with over 8700 registrants and 6200 papers and (b) the AAG plans to encourage specialty group activities in a regional AAG meeting each year, with the meeting selected for such additional attention rotating each year among the various regional divisions.
6. The Jeanne X. Kasperson Student Paper Award Session was a success again this year. Five students were selected to participate: Mark Barnes (Rutgers University); Yolanda McDonald (University of Texas-El Paso); Hyun Kim (Texas A & M University); Nicole Simons (San Diego State University); and Elyse Zavar (Texas State University-San Marcos). Cova congratulated the presenters upon the quality of their papers.
7. Two individuals were selected to receive the Gilbert F. White Award this year, and six volunteers reviewed the submissions. Nine submissions were received, four at the Ph.D. level and five at the Masters level. At the Master's degree level Chongming Wang was selected to receive the award, based upon his thesis, "Trapped in place: the vulnerability of the elderly to hurricane hazards in Sarasota, Florida" (Penn State University). At the Ph.D. level Eric Tate was selected to receive the award, based upon his dissertation entitled

“Indices of social vulnerability to hazards: uncertainty and sensitivity” (University of South Carolina).” Dr. Tate was presented a check for \$250.00 and received applause from specialty group members. Wang will be mailed a check for \$250.00. Both White Award recipients will also receive an autographed copy of the two-volume *Geography, Resources, and Environment* and the Gilbert White Award plaque.

8. Two honorable mentions were also given for the Gilbert White Thesis/Dissertation Award, both at the Ph.D. level. These were James Jeffers, “Confronting climate: linking knowledge, values, and decision-making to vulnerability and adaptation in Ireland’s coastal cities” (Rutgers University), and Anneliese Poetz, “Risk is a social thing, not just a mathematical thing: a model for the management of risk in institutional decision-making” (McMaster University).
9. Cross distributed the Treasurer’s Report, which was reviewed. The specialty group had \$3,812.68 as of February 20, 2012. Approximately \$600 in expenses for the 2012 White Award have yet to be deducted from the account. Even though the specialty group has been spending slightly more than it has received in dues payments for the past several years, its financial situation remains strong.
10. Two individuals were nominated to fill a specialty group director position: Phil Chaney and Bandana Kar. After the ballots were counted, Chaney was declared the winner.
11. Burrell Montz moved (Hagelman seconded) that John Cross be re-elected as secretary-treasurer. Passed unanimously.
12. The nomination of Elyse Zavar for student director had been received before the meeting. From the floor J. Ken Mitchell nominated Mark Barnes (James Jeffers seconded). Ballots were distributed and Zavar was elected.
13. Potential activities for the 2013 Annual Meeting in Los Angeles were discussed. Suggestions for sessions included (a) wildfire papers; (b) local themes; and (c) Global Change. It was suggested that Mike Davis might be asked to do a plenary session. Desires for local hazards field trip(s) were expressed. Deborah Thomas mentioned difficulties and added expenses from organizing field trips through the AAG Central Office. Chaney suggested collaboration with the Coastal and Marine Specialty Group in organizing a field trip.
14. Old Business: None.
15. New Business:
 - (a) Cova urged the specialty group members to add the word “disasters” to the specialty group name. Members reviewed the original reasons for focusing upon hazards, but noted the recent work of many hazards geographers regarding response to disasters.

Bringing “disasters” formally into the fold of the specialty group would also allow better coordination of the scheduling of hazards and disaster paper sessions to avoid conflicting sessions and would recognize the intimate connections between hazards and disaster studies. Anya Butt moved (Deborah Thomas seconded) that the specialty group be renamed: “Hazards, Risks, and Disasters Specialty Group.” Passed unanimously.

- (b) Cova noted that the current specialty group dues are the exact median and mode of all specialty groups. Because it was anticipated that the change in name may bring in more members and the group has a reasonable balance of funds, members expressed a desire to keep the dues at their current levels.
- (c) Eligibility requirements for the Gilbert White Award were discussed. Montz moved (Chaney seconded) that award contestants must be AAG members at the time they submit their thesis or dissertation for consideration. Passed unanimously.

16. Cova adjourned the meeting at 8:30, urging members to meet at the Ava Lounge of the nearby Dream Hotel for socialization and to informal discussions.