

**AAG Hazards Specialty Group
Annual Business Meeting Minutes
San Francisco Hilton Hotel, San Francisco, California
April 18, 2007**

1. The meeting was called to order by Jayajit Chakraborty, specialty group chair. Twenty-one members were present.
2. Chakraborty distributed the meeting agenda. Ron Hagelman moved (Jerry Mitchell seconded) approval of the agenda. Passed unanimously.
3. John Cross, specialty group secretary-treasurer, distributed minutes of the 2006 specialty group business meeting. Hagelman moved (Heather Bell seconded) that the minutes be approved. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Chakraborty reviewed items discussed at the meeting of specialty group chairs: (1) the 2007 AAG meeting attendance has broken all records, with over 6700 registrants, of which 23 percent are international geographers and 15 percent are non-geographers, with approximately 4,000 presentations being made; (2) the 2008 Boston AAG meeting arrangements with the hosting hotels were made anticipating 4,000 attendees, so the AAG Central Office has encouraged specialty groups to be more selective in scheduling papers and sessions and to have larger combined sessions, with increased quality control suggested for groups; (3) all geographers and specialty groups were encouraged to establish ties with other disciplinary areas to work on common interests, and funds may be requested from the AAG Central Office for that purpose; (4) the 53rd specialty group has been established, "State of the American South"; and (5) the AAG web page for specialty groups includes annual reports of the various groups, with the AAG Central Office encouraging groups to make better use of the reports as recruiting tools..
5. Twenty-five sessions were sponsored or co-sponsored by the Hazards Specialty Group during the San Francisco AAG Meeting, double that of last year. There was increased collaboration with other specialty groups. Three sessions of orphan papers were organized by Hagelman. In addition, many hazards related papers appeared in sessions that did not seek specialty group sponsorship, with Chakraborty reporting that he counted 216 papers that referred to hazards within their abstracts. The first Gilbert White Award Symposia was one of the AAG's featured sessions for Thursday, during which the winner of last year's award will present his research and respond to questions and comments from a panel of four individuals who had read his dissertation.
6. Membership in the Hazards Specialty Group has grown to 329, an increase of 21 from last year. Fifty percent of the members are students. The specialty group remains among the top third in its overall membership.
7. Cross distributed the Treasurer's Report, which was reviewed. The specialty group had \$4,521.58 as of April 12, 2007. Income from dues and interest totaled \$977.02, while expenses of \$922.20 were incurred to pay the meeting registration fees for five winners of the Jeanne X. Kasperson Student Paper Competition and the specialty group's website hosting expenses. Expenses over the past year approximately equaled income even though expenses related to this year's Gilbert White Award had yet to be incurred. Cross reported that given the costs of both the Kasperson Student

Paper Competition and the White Award, the specialty group is spending about 40 percent more than its income. While not an immediate problem, given the group's large balance, it will become a problem in the future if an individual wins the Gilbert White Award every year.

8. Chakraborty indicated that six students submitted abstracts for the Kasperson Student Paper Competition this year. Their extended 1,000 word abstracts were reviewed by Bell, Cross, Hagelman, and Deborah Thomas. Five persons were selected as winners.
9. Chakraborty announced that Sara Grineski, a recent graduate of Arizona State University, whose dissertation was entitled "Social Vulnerability, Environmental Inequity, and Childhood Asthma in Phoenix, AZ," was selected to receive the 2007 Gilbert White Award. Because of the lateness of her selection, Dr. Grineski will be sent the award, consisting of a check for \$500.00, an autographed two-volume set of Gilbert White's *Geography, Resources, and Environment*, and a plaque. She was present to receive a round of applause from specialty group members, and Chakraborty told her that the specialty group would feature her work during its Gilbert White Award Symposia at the Boston AAG Meeting. In addition, Cross will send a letter to the director of the University of Colorado Natural Hazards Center requesting that the winner be invited to attend this year's Hazards Workshop. Chakraborty thanked the three persons (Bell, Hagelman, and Thomas) who reviewed the six theses/dissertations that were submitted for consideration for the Gilbert White Award. Again this year, several high quality submissions were received, making the selection of the winner particularly challenging.
10. Several changes in the process of reviewing submissions for the Gilbert White Award were proposed and discussed. To speed the review process, it was suggested that applicants be invited to submit their dissertations or theses electronically, enabling several members of the committee to simultaneously read the same submission and eliminate the time-consuming process of mailing the submissions to successive reviewers. Bell mentioned problems with transmitting large files, but mentioned that it might be possible to post the electronic submissions on the Specialty Group's website which could be accessible to the committee by using a secured, password protected access protocol. Burrell Montz moved (Susan Macey seconded) that all future Gilbert White Award submissions should be done electronically. Passed unanimously. (The deadline for submission of dissertations and theses to be considered for next year's White Award is January 15, 2008. Any submissions that are received after the deadline date will be reviewed, but will be considered for the following year's award.)
11. Chakraborty reported that two individuals had been nominated for specialty group chair: Hagelman and Macey. Mitchell moved (Graham Tobin seconded) that nominations be closed. Motion passed unanimously. Both candidates spoke briefly about their experience, while Mitchell distributed ballots. Mitchell tallied the votes and reported that Ron Hagelman was elected as specialty group chair.
12. Chakraborty indicated that one person had been nominated to serve a two-year term as specialty group director: Susan Macey. Christine Rodrigue moved (Jay Baker seconded) that nominations be closed and that a unanimous ballot be cast for Susan Macey. Motion passed unanimously.
13. Plans for the 2008 Annual Meeting in San Francisco were discussed. Sessions suggested include (1) Gilbert White Award Symposia, featuring Sara Grineski; and (2) orphan papers that will be organized by Deborah Thomas. Cross mentioned that he would like to see a field trip and/or special paper session showcasing the hazards of the Boston or New England area.

14. Under Old Business, the AAG listserv that began two years ago continues being a way to rapidly disseminate information to all members (but software problems prevented members cutting and pasting notices, requiring the notice to be directly typed into the system). The specialty group's domain name (www.hazardsaag.org) continues valid for another year, and it is yet another means to disseminate information. Mitchell was thanked for his efforts as its webmaster. Cross suggested that members be e-mailed when the website is updated with new information.
15. Tobin and Montz circulated flyers promoting the Applied Geography Conference scheduled for October 17-20, 2007, in Indianapolis, Indiana. This meeting, which attracts about 300 attendees, includes many papers by hazards geographers, and they encouraged specialty group members to attend. Some of the papers are published in the peer-reviewed conference proceedings.
16. Meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM.