

EDUCATION-COMMUNICATIONS REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Event Name:

Association of American Geographers 100th
Annual Meeting

Attendee's Name:

Joseph J. Kerski, Geographer:
Education/GIS, Denver

Locations: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Event Date: 14-20 March 2004

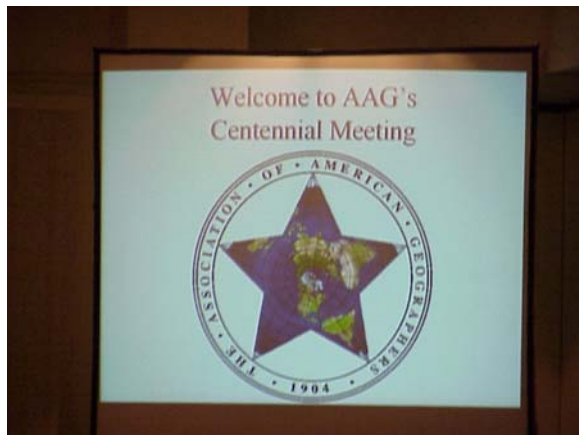
Summary

I joined over 5,000 colleagues in the 2004 annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers (AAG). In attendance were university and community college professors, graduate students, those from government, nonprofit organizations, and private industry, K-12 teachers, and researchers from many countries around the globe. We presented papers, operated information exhibits, served in panel sessions, and shared and learned from each other. One has to only look at the hundreds of sessions at the AAG conference to understand the diversity of geography today.

The 2004 AAG annual meeting was held in Philadelphia because it was here in 1904 when the AAG was founded. The annual meetings are a wonderful experience that energizes everyone present.



The 100th AAG meeting occurred during the same month when the USGS turned 125 years old. The USGS was created by an Act of Congress on 3 March 1879. Therefore, the event occurred during a very special year for both the AAG and the USGS. Nine of the 48 charter AAG members in 1904 were USGS scientists. This year, the USGS became a corporate member of the AAG; our scientists participated in at least 41 paper sessions, and we operated an exhibit as well as a USGS Demonstration room.



AAG Director Doug Richardson, left, with

2004 AAG President Murphy. They asked me to be the co-chair of the local arrangements committee for the 2005 Annual Meeting in Denver. How could I say no to the President?



Where else can one hug a globe but at an AAG conference?



William Penn atop City Hall, 18 March 2004.



Philadelphia's Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was signed.



One of Philadelphia's historic narrow cobblestone streets.

Each attendee at the AAG conference received two wonderful books: *Geography and Technology*, and *World Minds, Geographical Perspectives on 100 Problems*. I urge all geographers and others to investigate these two books, from Kluwer Academic Publishers.



One of Philadelphia's amazing murals.



The 100th meeting of the AAG was also the largest with over 5,000 attendees.



The Philadelphia Marriott, site of the 100th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers (AAG), above and below.



The opening session featured Rita Colwell, Director of the National Science Foundation, who spoke about "The New Landscape of Science—A Geographic Portal." After Dr Colwell spoke, the Rittenhouse String Quartet played some wonderful music with a geographical theme!





ESRI President Jack Dangermond in a panel session that discussed the future of geography entitled "Perspectives on Geography's Status and Potential." Others on the panel included Enloe, Grosvenor, and Sachs.



The AAG conference provided an excellent time for professional development, meeting old friends, and networking with colleagues from all around the world.

My Activities at the Meeting

- 1) Presented paper entitled "Global GIS: Geography Lessons for the World."
- 2) Presented a segment in the panel: Geography and International Education that assessed developments in GIS in education over the past 15 years.

3) Assisted in operating, setting up, and tearing down our USGS exhibit.

4) Served in the USGS National Map demonstration room by helping data users with questions and guiding them through USGS web-based resources.

5) Presented "Mapping Your Story with the USGS" with Jon Campbell for journalists.

6) Participated in meetings concerning a new National Science Digital Library proposal.

7) Met with Karen Kemp from the University of Redlands on a book chapter we plan to author on GIS and Education, and with Seth Triggs from the University at Buffalo about a mapping article.

8) Attended paper, plenary, specialty group meetings, poster sessions, and other events as described in this report.

USGS staffpersons conducted at least 41 papers at the conference. These reflected the diversity of our science and the diversity of geography, including topics on coastal processes, land use, quantitative methods.

USGS Demonstration Room



This year, the USGS purchased space to operate The National Map demonstration room. This featured areas to hear presentations from USGS staff, ask questions of USGS staff, and workstations for attendees to try USGS spatial data portals for themselves. The room included presentations, posters, and demonstrations of the national fire fuels assessment, Landsat 7 products, infectious disease atlas, educational partnerships, impervious cover, and mapping for journalists, among other features.



USGS staffpersons in the demo room included Kathleen Gohn and Jon Campbell surrounding USGS Geography Director Barb Ryan (center).



The National Map demo room was in a fairly prominent spot adjacent to the main exhibit hall and featured scheduled presentations throughout three days as well as staff available to anyone who wanted to “drop in” and ask questions.



One of several USGS posters commemorating the 125th Anniversary of our organization, with our second director John Wesley Powell, left, and current director Charles Groat, right.



Much of the success with The National Map demo room can be attributed to the efforts of Kathleen Gohn and Jon Campbell.



USGS Deputy Director Bob Doyle, right, greets USGS employees during our preconference gathering on 14 March 2004.



USGS Director of Geography Barb Ryan,

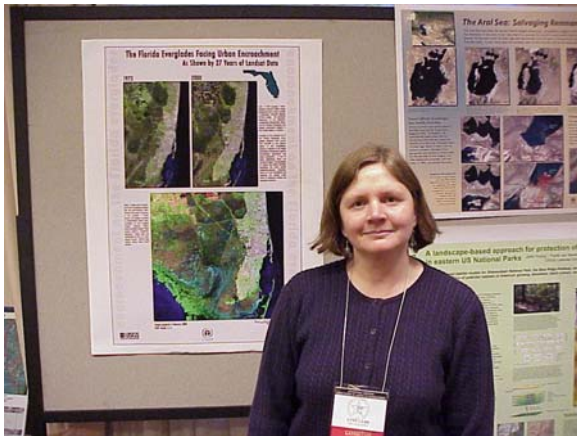
left, and geography professor Keith Clark.



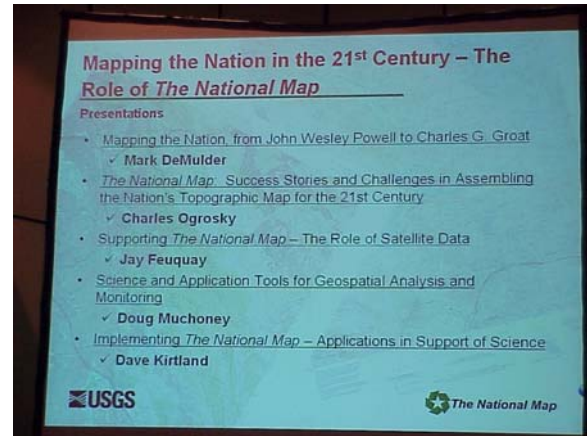
USGS remote sensing specialist Gyanesh Chander stands next to his poster in The National Map demo room.



Joseph Kerski and Jon Campbell conduct their presentation “Mapping Your Story with the USGS.” We gave our presentation for the USGS staff and the other attendees present, including a scientist from Natural Resources Canada, but no journalists were present. We need additional publicity for this event for next year, as it focused on how to use satellite images, maps, real-time streamflow, and other USGS spatial information for the news media.



Remote sensing specialist Rynn Lamb in The National Map demo room. Rynn and I are working on planning for the ASPRS conference, May 2004, Denver.



Overview of what Barb Ryan, Mark DeMulder, Charles Ogrosky, Jay Feuquay, Doug Machoney, and David Kirtland discussed along with Barb Ryan during the session.

The National Map Panel Session



During the first full day of the conference, six USGS staffpersons conducted a session on The National Map.

Other Sessions

I attended many informative plenary sessions and paper sessions and once again, I thank my colleagues for sharing their expertise. These included:

- Costa Rica mapping and wetlands education session.
- Gridded population of the world.
- GIS in K-12 Education session.
- Research in Geography Education.

and others.



One of my favorite geographers, Yi-Fu Tuan, was included in a large plenary session entitled “Where we have come from and where we stand—Views of American Geography.” The session also included Hanson, Wolman, and Goodchild.



Gilbert Grosvenor, great-grandson of Alexander Graham Bell and Chairman of the National Geographic Society, emphasized geographic education in his presentation, of which NGS has been a key supporter.



Panel on geography’s role in public debate that included geographers DeBlij, Gilmore, Gregory (pictured), and Turner.



I attended a planning session on an upcoming National Science Digital Library proposal.



One of the posters in the AAG Hall of History, a special event for the 100th Anniversary Meeting. This was a fascinating exhibit—I only wish I had contributed a poster or two to it.

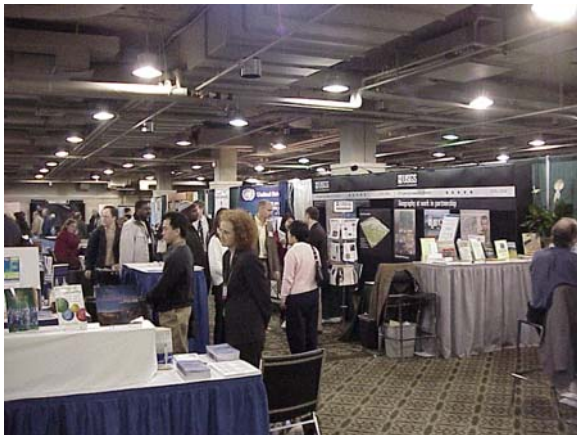


Geographers on Film showed continuously during the conference, a collection of dozens of historical and present-day films of prominent geographers discussing their work.



Some of the USGS exhibit staff, L-to-R: Joseph Kerski, Jon Campbell, Martha Kiger, Kathleen Gohn, and Stephen LePage. Others included Pat Phillips, Roger Barlow, Jonathan Smith, and many more.

USGS Exhibit



The USGS exhibit, at right, was located in a double-booth space in a prominent spot near the entrance to the exhibit hall.



*Conference attendees, as in years past, cleared out all of the thematic maps we brought in a few hours; fortunately, we had many other materials to distribute, including information on *The National Map*, USGS guidelines on the use of spatial data for GIS-based analysis, *The National Atlas*, geography lessons based on USGS resources, and other items.*



The USGS exhibit was quite busy throughout the annual meeting and it was a pleasure to speak with those who visited. Above, Karen Renee Wood and Stephen LePage from USGS headquarters work with visitors to our exhibit.

Exhibit Hall



The AAG exhibit hall is perennially one of my favorite places, and some of my favorite maps are made by Klett, above.



This year's exhibitors included publishers (University of Texas Press, Blackwell, and Wiley, for example), map companies (such as Rand McNally), geography organizations (such as the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE)), government organizations (such as the USGS, Bureau of Census, NASA DAAC,

and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency), software companies (such as Pixoneer and ESRI), field equipment companies (such as Applied Field Data Systems), and others.



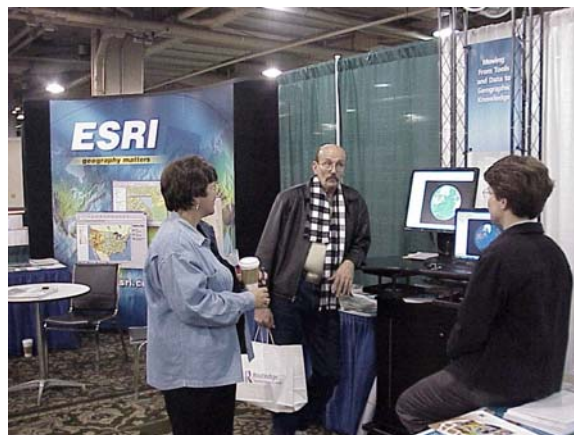
I worked in the National Council for Geographic Education's exhibit as I am serving a term on the NCGE Board. On the right is NCGE Associate Director Allison Newton.



NASA DAAC exhibit featuring a wonderful extra-large monitor with satellite imagery.

In the exhibit hall, I was pleased to chat with a staffperson from the Royal Geographical Society at their exhibit, as I was inducted as an RGS Fellow in 2003. It was also particularly excellent to speak with colleagues from Applied Field Data

Systems, from NASA DAAC, from Thomson Brooks Cole Publishers, and from ESRI.



Above, Ann Johnson and Angela Lee, education specialists from ESRI.

Poster Sessions



A highlight of the AAG conferences is the rotating series of maps and posters from researchers from all over the world. This one, above, featured innovative geography education research.

Geography Education Specialty Group Meeting



The AAG includes at least 60 specialty groups representing regions of the world, and topical specialties such as GIS, remote sensing, cartography, cultural geography, historical geography, and geography education. I participated in the geography education specialty group meeting, above; Bruce Sievertson is our chairperson.

Silent Auction



A very clever idea: A silent auction was held featuring numerous interesting items, the proceeds of which benefited the AAG's

Advancing Geography Centennial Fund.



I donated USGS maps, some of which are pictured above, to the silent auction.

New Discoveries

American Geographical Society Director Mary Lynne Bird wrote an outstanding article about Hidden Geographers in the March 2004 newsletter *Ubique*. The theme of the article was that geographers make contributions to an enormous number of companies and organizations, and featured some very interesting examples. I plan to use this article in future workshops.

Dr Dobson from the University of Kansas wrote an interesting article about "A Unified Legislative Agenda for Geography and GIS" in the same *Ubique* newsletter.

The article in Nature magazine about "Mapping Opportunities" was placed in all of the attendees' conference handbags. This is another excellent article to use in workshops and future conferences, because it emphasizes the role that spatial technologies play in the future of societies. AAG Director Doug Richardson is quoted in the article.

Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, the oldest Historically Black College in the USA,

was awarded the first GIS bachelor's program in the state.

ESRI Press is about to publish a wonderful historical mapping book from David Rumsey.

Pixoneer has developed some impressive Remote Sensing courses.

ESRI Press has published a new book called *Mastering GIS* that contains video clips for learning GIS.

A national educational technology plan has been created for the country, on nationaledtechplan.org.

Recommendations

We absolutely need to be involved with the AAG in education and research. The AAG is the number one geography professional society in North America and one of the leading such organizations in the world. Half of the exhibitors at AAG were USGS partners to one degree or another.

My only regret at the conference was that I looked for but could not find the Philadelphia Electric Company towers. These buildings display enormous rotating lighted messages. During AAG week, they posted the following: "Know Your World—Study Geography—Geographers Celebrate 100 Years."

NCGE Executive Planning Board Meeting



The Executive Planning Board of the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) meets twice a year—at NCGE and at AAG conferences. The NCGE was founded in 1915 to support geographic education research and teaching. The web site for NCGE is www.ncge.org and its main journal is the Journal of Geography. We discussed membership, finance, research, new publications, our web presence, and other topics. NCGE's next conference is in October 2004 in Kansas City. I serve on the Research and External Relations Committee for a two-year term.



2004 NCGE President Gwenda Rice, left, and 2006 NCGE President Ken Foote at our NCGE Board Meeting.

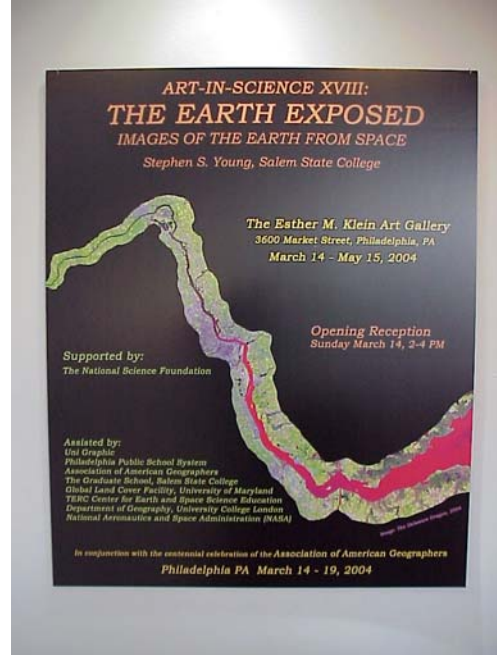
Art Exhibit: The Earth Exposed



Stephen Young from Salem State College created a science-meets-art exhibit at the Klein Art Gallery at the University of Pennsylvania. I was glad I made the effort to see the exhibit, which featured fascinating satellite images from around the globe, including an enormous Landsat scene of the East Coast, above.



The exhibit included an interesting double-mirror image of the Mississippi River delta.



Title image for the exhibit. I have been working with TERCS on and off for many years, and it was no surprise to find out that the exhibit stemmed from an NSF grant that is associated with a program created by the TERCS Center for Earth and Space Science Education.

Field Trips



I was too busy to attend any of the planned field trips, so, donning a geographic tie, I took one of my own. What better way to end the continent's largest geography

*conference than with a pilgrimage to the
intersection of latitude 40 North and
longitude 76 West?*



*Seth Triggs from the University at Buffalo
and I walked to the 30th Street Railroad
Station in Philadelphia—a magnificent
structure.*

As the AAG signs were taken down, I noted that the next convention was for the Snack Foods Association. Maybe I should have stayed a bit longer... I bet the Snack Food Association had excellent breaks!

*** End of 2004 Association of American
Geographers Annual Meeting Report ***