

Rural Geography Specialty Group 2006 Report – June 2006.
By Peter Nelson, Outgoing Chair

I. Mission Statement

The Rural Geography specialty group promotes research and education related to agriculture, rural development and rural land use. To fulfill this mission, we: plan sessions for professional meetings, facilitate teaching and research of rural geography issues worldwide, publicize information about the role of geographers engaged in rural research, and promote interaction with organizations with similar interests, such as the IGU Rural Development Commission

II. 2006 Membership and Finances

The current balance of the RGSG accounts is as follows

Association of American Geographers
Specialty Groups Financial Report
April 30, 2006

Rural Specialty Group

<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Disbursements</u>	<u>Balance</u>
8/31/05	<i>Balance forward</i>			<i>\$ 3,783.48</i>
9/30/05	Dues collected for September 2005	80.00		3,863.48
10/31/05	Dues collected for October 2005	125.00		3,988.48
11/30/05	Dues collected for November 2005	105.00		4,093.48
12/31/05	Dues collected for December 2005	75.00		4,168.48
1/31/06	Dues collected for January 2006	40.00		4,208.48
2/28/06	Dues collected for February 2006	45.00		4,253.48
3/24/06	Wilson, Randall - Awards luncheon tickets		(90.00)	4,163.48
3/31/06	Dues collected for March 2006	55.00		4,218.48
4/30/06	Dues collected for April 2006	40.00		4,258.48
4/30/06	Balance			<u><u>\$ 4,258.48</u></u>

This balance does not reflect a disbursement of \$100 to Ryan Galt for winning the student paper competition. We realize we have a sizeable balance in reserve and are considering ways to spend some of this money at the San Francisco meetings. We may also decide to use some of this money to defray costs for 1-2 graduate students to attend the international meeting next summer.

As of June 1, we have 433 members (168 non-students, and 265 students). This reflects a slight increase over last year. All of the increase was in student members.

III. Officers

Chair –

Marla Emery (Through 2008)
US Forest Service
NE Research Station
Burlington, VT
memery@fs.fed.us

Directors –

Holly Barcus (Through 2008)
McCalester College
h.barcus@moreheadstate.edu

Carl Wilmsen (Through 2007)
University of California – Berkeley
cwilmsen@nature.berkeley.edu

Christopher Merrett (Through 2007)
Western Illinois University
CD-Merrett@wiu.edu

Student Director

Mary Dobbs (Through 2007)
Kansas State University
birddobbs@aol.com

Secretary Treasurer

John Cromartie (through 2007)
Economic Research Service, USDA
Jbc@ers.usda.gov

Awards Director

Randy Wilson (through 2007)
Gettysburg College
rwilson@gettysburg.edu

Newsletter Editor/Webmaster (Through 2008)

Verdie Craig
Moorehead State University
v.craig@moreheadstate.edu

IV. Accomplishments, Activities Scheduled, Future Plans and Directions

Business Meeting: The 2006 annual business meeting was held between 7:30 and 8:30 on March 10 in Chicago, Illinois. Approximately 20 people attended. The chair passed on information from the AAG to the specialty group. Most of the meeting was spent discussing two group issues. First,

Randy Wilson proposed a change in the way the student paper competition would be administered. In the future, the competition will be based on written papers submitted approximately 2 weeks prior to the annual meetings. This new format will allow the award winner to be announced at the actual meeting rather than waiting an entire year to honor the student winner.

The second substantive business item was the 2007 international rural geography conference to be hosted by Eastern Washington University and the University of Idaho. We have received preliminary cost estimates for the conference, and are now working on a formal call for papers. The minutes from this meeting will be available at the RGSG website shortly.

2006 Annual Meeting: In Chicago, we sponsored or co-sponsored 15 sessions covering topics ranging from population change and exurban growth to the role of farmers' markets in shaping consumers' perspectives on rural spaces. The sessions were well-attended, and we agreed to continue encouraging organizers to include time for a discussant, as this allows more conversation with and feedback for paper presenters. We were also encouraged by the large number of students who entered the student paper competition. With over 10 entries, we were able to organize multiple "New Voices" sessions, and will continue to develop these strategies for the San Francisco meetings.

Specialty Group Awards:

Student Paper Competition – the 2005 student paper award went to Gina Thornburg of California State University-Northridge. She attended the AAG Awards Luncheon as our guest.

The RGSG has also agreed to coordinate a new award on behalf of Brigham Young University. The award will be given to the most outstanding research paper focusing on the inter-mountain West. This award competition will start at the AAG in 2007, so look for a special call for papers later this summer.

Sessions for the 2007 meetings in San Francisco:

Our existing session planning strategies appear to be working with between 15 and 20 sponsored sessions over the past few years. We agreed that officers should continue on as the "clearinghouse" for sponsoring sessions.