GEOMORPHORUM

Newsletter of the Geomorphology Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers

Issue No. 1, 1997 Carol Harden, editor

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EDITOR'S NOTE

GEOMORPHORUM is issued twice a year by the Geomorphology Specialty Group (GSG) of the Association of American Geographers. The purpose of this newsletter is to exchange ideas and news abot geomorphology, and to foster improved communication within our community of scholars and professionals.

This issue of GEOMORPHORUM initiates a transition from being a paper newsletter, which was also distributed electronically over Geomorphlist, to existing only in virtual reality. The paper copy of this issue contains brief highlights of the newsletter and instructions on how to find the rest: (1) subscribe to Geomorphlist or (2) visit the AAG web page and select Geomorphology Specialty Group. Yes — we can do this!

As the leadership torch is passed, I would like to thank Bruce Rhoads for his service as Chair of the Geomorphology Specialty Group. The GSG Executive Committee is now:
Bruce Rhoads, Past Chair;
Carol Harden, Chair;
Jeff Lee, Secretary-Treasurer
The GSG Advisory Board is:
Vatche Tchakerian, senior representative;
Allan James;
Bruce Rhoads
The GSG Awards Committee is:
Ron Dorn, Chair;
Anne Chin;
Bill Renwick

I look forward to serving as your GSG chair this year. I propose that we pay particular attention this year to our geomorphology-oriented students this year: encouraging them to participate in meetings (including our annual business meeting), compete for student research and proposal awards, and submit their views and comments for the coming issues of GEOMORPHORUM.

Carol Harden charden@utk.edu

Minutes of the Meeting 3 April 1997, Ft. Worth Texas

The meeting was called to order by Carol Harden, Secretary-Treasurer, standing in for Bruce Rhoads, Chair, who was unable to attend the meeting.
Minutes from 1996 business meeting were approved as written in the summer, 1996, issue of GEOMORPHORUM.
Membership report - about 450 people receive GEOMORPHORUM.
Treasurer's report, given by Carol Harden:

> A week ago, the GSG had a balance of $1866.38, having had no income or expenses since last summer. During the last week, dues were transferred from AAG (but the treasurer hasn't yet received notice of the transfer). Also pending are the expenses for awards (not yet presented to the treasurer). [Note since meeting: dues income was $1645; $1020 was paid out for awards; dividend of $.07 accrued; balance became $2491.45]

New Business

1. Selection process for IAG representation We share our representation in the International Association of Geomorphologists with the GSA. Allan James (AJ) reminded us that we voted last year to have the three members of our executive board be our IAG representatives, with the most senior member as senior IAG rep. We also agreed to have GSA have the voting rep in 1997; we would then have the vote in 2001.

AJ noted that GSA had subsequently decided to choose one of our 3 reps. Because this was not consistent with our decision, AJ will work with Karen Prestegaard (GSA) to resolve the procedure. Will Graf reminded us that GSA is happy to work with us and wants to have good relationships with us. AJ proposed that we continue as we had decided, with Vatche as our voting representative. No action is required by the GSG as a whole at this time.

2. Geography in America The first Geography in America book, edited by G. Gaile and C. Willmott, was published in 1989. AAG now plans to produce a second one, called Geography in America: 21st Century. for the year 2000. Specialty groups are asked to participate. The timetable is:

> Now -- decide how to select 1-4 authors from GSG
> Next year's (1998) business meeting -- select author(s)who will meet with editor at the AAG meeting

Upcoming Meetings:

The International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG) meeting will be in Bologna, Italy, Aug. 28 - Sept. 3, 1997. The 28th Binghamton Symposium will be in Bologna on August 29-30 (same time, same venue as IAG). The Binghamton Symposium, convened by Rick Giardino and Dick Marston, has the theme "Changing the Face of the Earth: Engineering Geomorphology." Denise Reed reported that anyone interested in a Working Group on Geomorphology and Management should contact her or Olav Slaymaker (Univ. Br. Columbia).

1998 AAG to be held in Boston. Note that the timing of the meeting will be Wed. evening through Sunday morning, with sessions scheduled for 7:15 am - 7:15 PM if there are as many sessions as usual. The meeting will be in a smaller space, without as many rooms for presentations. Groups are encouraged to organize poster sessions or poster-paper hybrids, e.g., with 2-5 minute talks plus posters displayed in the meeting room.

A strong incentive to do a poster: regular paper requires abstract received by Sept. 3 by AAG while poster abstracts are due Oct. 1.

The 1998 Binghamton Symposium, convened by Bernie Bauer and Doug Sherman, will be on Coastal Geomorphology and will be held on Halloween at Woods Hole. Bernie and Doug are putting together a list of authors to present backward- and forward-looking papers on different coastal systems. Contact Doug if you are interested in offering a paper. They hope for attendance from more than coastal-types.

Bill Nickling announced the July 4th annual aeolian geomorphology symposium, and Nick Lancaster announced that DRI (Desert Research Institute) would host a symposium on changing water regimes in June 1997 at Lake Tahoe. Nick also announced a theme session on dryland geomorphology at the GSA meeting in Salt Lake City in October '97.

Report from the AAG Council

Dick Marston reported that the AAG has a sympathetic new president and VP, and that the secretary is physical geographer. With other physical geographers on AAG committees:

Harden on the Honors committee, Mather and Trimble in the nominating committee, we should have no more reasons for complaining about being underrepresented.

Marston announced that Stuart Aitken and Janet Franklin (San Diego State) are the new editors for the Professional Geographer, and he recommended that everyone look at the AAG web page - already impressive and expanding, particularly in the direction of helping students find work. While on the web, also take a look at Earth Interactions Journal, a new publishing alternative co-sponsored by AAG.

AAG will commit $30,000 to help students travel to the Honolulu meeting. AAG is also asking specialty groups and regional groups to put up student travel awards. In fact, about 800 students come to the meetings (about 25%)of meeting participation. (*see below)*

Finally, Marston called our attention to Rediscovering Geography, published by National Academy of Sciences; a book that will set the direction Geography takes for 1-2 decades. It would be good to put it in the hands of key administrators on your campus.

Funds for the Honolulu Meeting

AAG will put up and award funds to students who need financial support to be able to attend the Honolulu meeting (1999). In addition, AAG asks specialty groups to commit funding awards for students to attend the Honolulu meeting and to administer those awards as they choose. AAG wants to know of our level of commitment so it can then go to corporate sponsors — it hopes to raise $250K. Harden asked for discussion. Dixon suggested that we tie additional award(s) to the student paper competition. There followed some discussion of the potential timing problems of this approach. The present procedure for student awards is to submit an abstract at regular AAG abstract deadline with a letter of intent to apply and a full paper by Feb. 15th. Awards are then determined after papers are presented at the annual meeting. How could student awardees be decided early enough that students could know they could afford to attend the meeting? This discussion was tabled until later in the meeting. [*Editor's note: Unfortunately, the Honolulu award question was not revisited, nor was a dollar amount committed to helping students attend the meeting. GSG members with ideas/opinions about this should contact Carol Harden.]*

Other Business

GEOMORPHORUM (The newsletter of the Geomorphology Specialty Group) - Can we wean ourselves from hard copies? Save trees? Save postage? Save time? Historically the cost of publishing and mailing GEOMORPHORUM twice a year has basically been absorbed by departments. AJ has GEOMORPHORA archived at South Carolina (http://www.cla.sc.edu/geog/gsgdocs/). The summer 1997 issue will be put on the web and every recent issue has been distributed via GEOMORPHLIST. Carol Harden vowed to initiate the weaning business in the summer 97 issue.

Joanne Mossa made a number of copies of a Louisiana Oil Spill map on CD available. Recipients have Jesse Walker (LSU) to thank. [*Thanks!]*

GEOMORPHOLOGY SPECIALTY GROUP AWARDS

I. In Memorium: Mel Marcus

The meeting paused for a moment of silence in memory of Mel, whose rich life ended unexpectedly in the field with students in the San Juan Mountains on March 2, 1997. Don Friend reported that ASU has established the Mel Marcus Scholarship Fund to fund student research in snow and ice. Checks may be written to: ASU

Foundation - Marcus Scholarship Fund. They should be sent to: Jodi Flores, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287-1701. Details of the ASU scholarship are not yet firm, but it will be a competitive scholarship. Alternatively, gifts in Mel's memory may be sent to AGS, AAG, or the Yosemite Institute.

Bill Nickling, Chair of the GSG Awards Committee, made the following recommendation:

> "Most of you who knew Mel knew of his spirit and his verve for research and his verve for dealing with people. As I look across the room here, I can see so many faces of people who Mel has touched in some way. I certainly was. Mel Marcus was my Ph.D. external examiner, so I saw the bad side of him in that; he also offered me my first experience in the desert and changed me from an arctic person to a desert research person, so I have great fond memories. I can see Vatche Tchakerian and David Butler, and so many people, and since Mel's death a couple of weeks ago, I've had several e-mails as chair of the awards committee that there needs to be some memorial to Mel and perhaps it should be through our group. As most of you know, Mel was not primarily a geomorphologist, but what Mel was was a consummate physical geographer. And I would like to think that we all, somewhere deep inside, want to be the consummate physical geographer to pull in all those bits of climatology, soils, and geomorphology to try to explain landscape. And so, based on a suggestion initiated by Dave Butler and followed by other individuals and discussed in the awards committee, we are putting forth a motion that the Distinguished Career Award, which has no formal name, be henceforth called the **Mel Marcus Distinguished Career Award**. And so I would make that motion and ask for a second." (seconded)

Response to the motion was unanimous and enthusiastic. Bill will write to Mary Ann Marcus, and the name of the award will change for 1998.

II. <u>Student awards</u>

Bill Nickling reported the largest number of research proposals this year, and he thanked faculty members for their thorough reference letters. 1997 Research Proposal Award recipients were:

1. Master's student ($200) Brian P. Bender, University of Western Washington, for his proposal "Holocene Geomorphic Evolution and Stratigraphy of Cape Shoalwater, Washington."
2. Ph.D. student ($400) Andrew H. Investor, Dept. Geography, University of Georgia, for his proposal " Inland Eolian Dunes in Georgia: Age, Morphology, and Paleoclimatic Implications."

Best Student Paper Award was given to

> J. Michael Daniels, Louisiana State University, for his paper (co-authored with Richard Kesel), "Channel disturbance migration through a drainage network, Homoshitto River Basin, Mississippi."

III. <u>Professional Awards</u>:

Bill Nickling commented that a really good group of people had been nominated and that the winners really embodied the spirit of these awards — both as outstanding researchers and as individuals who have made tremendous contributions to the discipline. He asked the nominators to present the awards. The remarks of the nominators and responses of awardees are appended to these minutes.

The G.K. Gilbert Award was presented by Judy Haschenburger to <u>Jonathan Phillips</u>, for his paper "Deterministic Uncertainty in Landscapes," published in *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*.

The Distinguished Career Award is presented to a geomorphologist for outstanding contributions to the discipline. Vatche Tchakerian presented the award to <u>Nicholas Lancaster</u>.

IV. Awards Committee Business

Election of a **new member of awards committee**. Bill (outgoing chair) called for new individual to serve a 3 year term ("first year practice, second year team member, third year you get the job"). Next year's chair is Ron Dorn; Anne Chin will move to chair the following year. **Bill Renwick** was nominated and elected to serve on the Awards Committee.

Protocol for student paper award. It appears that requirement for a written paper reduces the number of students who participate. The Awards Committee moves that we withdraw requirement for written paper (like Coastal and Climate specialty groups). Jonathan Phillips suggested that we trust the wisdom and experience of the committee. The [written] paper was eliminated by a unanimous vote of those present.

Don Friend asked whether we would have student sessions or run between sessions to hear student presenters at the next AAG meting. Nickling replied that if we had more entries, it would be essential to have special sessions, and he encouraged Ron Dorn to set up a student paper session for the Boston meeting, hopefully early in meeting so that results could be announced at GSG meeting.

Election of New Secretary-Treasurer

The secretary-treasurer monitors funds and produces GEOMORPHORUM in the first year following election. In the second year, this person becomes the specialty group chair. Allan James nominated **Jeff Lee**. There were no further nominations. **Jeff was elected unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned.

These minutes respectfully submitted by Carol Harden, Secretary-Treasurer. They will be subject to approval by those present at the GSG business meeting in March, 1998.

End of business meeting minutes

SPECIALTY GROUP AWARDS
Presented April 3, 1997, at Fort Worth, Texas

The 1997 G.K. Gilbert Award

Presentation by Judy Haschenburger

"The award-winning paper is an important member in a long-standing investigation of concepts related to non-linear dynamics in the context of their potential application to describe geomorphological phenomena. The overall investigation is perhaps the most carefully qualified of any in science. The paper itself provides a set of general definitions for consideration of non-linear effects, pursued using a non-traditional approach. The result is a new approach and perspective to isolate chaos from noise arising from other sources, typically forcing the operations of geomorphic systems. Further, it gives a statement about the limits of interpretability in the face of limited spatial data, which I think is unique. Overall, the investigation is of major importance because of its fundamental nature. The limits within which we may arrive at explanation of geomorpho-logical landscapes are being illuminated.

The scholarship of this year's recipient is in the best tradition of G.K. Gilbert. It explores the edge where our certain knowledge meets our uncertain speculation about how the geomorphological world works. If Gilbert were to read this paper, he no doubt would be pleased to see that the science of geomorphology is alive and well in the intellectual calm of a stimulated scholar like this year's recipient. It gives me great pleasure to present the G.K. Gilbert Award for excellence in geomorphic research to Jonathan D. Phillips, for the article titled, "Deterministic Uncertainty in Landscapes "published in *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*."

Response by Jonathan Phillips

"I'm extremely pleased to find out that the person who nominated me was Judy, who knew me back when I had hair. When I look at the list of recipients of this award, I'm pretty sure I don't belong on it and I'm damn proud to be on it. I've nominated people for this award in the past, and in fact, I nominated someone this year — I take this award very seriously and I'm very proud of it. My intellectual debts are immense. They go out to many of you in this room. I can't possibly mention you all, but I'd like to thank you all.

The single most important group of questions facing humankind is how the earth can support 6 billion people and counting in any kind of humane, sustainable way. The study of earth processes and landforms, of the role of geomorphic processes in land degradation and of the carrying capacity of soils and landforms and natural hazards is absolutely critical and absolutely essential to finding the answers to those questions. In the natural sciences, there are no more important or fundamental issues than those involving the co-evolution of the lithosphere, the atmosphere, the hydrosphere, and the biosphere. And, again, Geomorphology is absolutely central and absolutely critical. The importance and the value of what we do is second to that of no other groupof scholars; the skill with which we do it, as a group, is second to none, and the fun we have doing it is unparalleled. We do important work, I'm proud to be one of us, and I'm proud of all of us. Sometimes we look at those kinds of questions and they look too immense to solve. We look at our expanding body of knowledge and it seems like we're raising more questions than we're answering and that we're finding more complications than generalizations. I've come to believe that the path we take, faced with those obstacles, is one that we walk by faith.

A year ago, I missed the AAG meeting because of Bay Rochelle Phillips. She was due about June 1; she came on Feb. 18, weighing 753 grams. We've all taken sediment samples that weighed more than that. The doctors told us, when my wife went into premature labor, that we would lose the baby, and I was trying to explain that to my son, Nate. He was 7 at the time; he insisted that he thought Bay would make it. I gently explained to him again what the doctors had said was going to happen. Nate indicated that he understood, but, in spite of all, believed that Bay would survive. Well, she did. Happy ending. But Nate convinced me, and ultimately all of us, that we should believe. It didn't much matter after that what the tangible evidence suggested, and sometimes the tangible evidence was pretty bad. We walked by faith and not by sight. And 111 days later Bay came home; she's now my new field assistant (in training), probably vomiting on something of mine right now. I've been thinking about that a lot, obviously there's not an hour that goes by that I don't think about it. But I think also that in our geomorphology, in our geography and in our science, we must often do the same thing in the face of what may seem like insurmountable tasks. I have a colleague among you who believes that ultimately we can understand river basin evolution on the basis of the mechanics of sediment transport, thus linking process mechanics with geological evolution. He's a consummate reductionist. He proceeds on the faith that as we gather more and increasingly detailed measurements that goal will be achieved. Now I happen to disagree with him, but I also feel that only good things can come from the effort. I believe that there can be derived a general set of principles governing the behavior of Earth surface systems. Now, there's a lot of you who disagree with me, and a lot of evidence suggesting that may not be the case, but I proceed based on the faith that complex, complicated structures can ultimately be interpreted as part of a broader, orderly, understandable pattern. And that's how I tried to view my whole experience with Bay.

I would like to dedicate this award to my wife, Lynn, who walked by faith and not by sight, believing in me and in my work even when there was no particularly good reason to do so; I dedicate it to Bay who is so gloriously independent of her initial conditions; I dedicate it to all of you, who are doing the most important and the coolest work in the world, and I dedicate it to Nate, who taught me to walk by faith and not by sight."

Geomorphology Specialty Group Career Award

The nomination letter was written by Vatche Tchakerian and Steve Wells (DRI).

Presentation by Vatche Tchakerian

"It is our great pleasure to nominate Dr. Nicholas Lancaster for the AAG Geomorphology Specialty Group's Distinguished Career Award. Dr. Lancaster's contributions to aeolian geomorphology within the last twenty years are phenomenal and outstanding. He has been one of the key players in the resurgence of aeolian geomorphology research the last twenty years. His exemplary record reflects his keen desire to understand the evolution of desert landscapes through the analysis of aeolian processes and landforms. He has published or has in press over 60 refereed papers, numerous book chapters and proceedings papers and three books. His 1995 book, *The Geomorphology of Desert Dunes*, perhaps summarizes best Nick's work for the last

twenty years. Nick is recognized as one of the world's leading aeolian geomorphologists and has conducted research in Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, Tunisia, China, Mexico, Southwestern United States and Antarctica, among others. Particularly noteworthy are his contributions in dune dynamics, including the mechanics of wind flow patterns over dunes; granulometric analysis of desert dune sediments; the star dunes of the Gran Desierto in northern Mexico; the Namib Sand Sea and his early work on linear dunes in the Kalahari Desert.

At the same time, Dr. Lancaster has fully participated with collaborative research with many other colleagues. Both of us have benefited enormously from collaborating with Nick, in the field and on paper. Much of Nick's research has been accomplished in the field, not in the laboratory. It has been done in remote desert areas where logistics and environmental conditions are extremely difficult. This fact makes his record of scholarly productivity even more impressive because data collection takes time and often conditions make it impossible to repeat the collection process if something is missed. He is a true field person and cherishes opportunities to set up field projects in fascinating desert locations.

If one opens any recent desert geomorphology book or an edited volume that has sections devoted to aeolian geomorphology, it is very likely that Dr. Lancaster's work is cited more frequently than any other aeolian author(s). We believe that he is genuinely one of the true stars in desert geomorphology and that his scholarly activities are stellar. Nick's research has also been recognized by other institutions including the Gladys W. Cole Memorial Research Award from the Geological Society of America and the Alessandro Dandini Medal of Science from the Desert Research Institute.

Dr. Lancaster's scholarly activities also extend to the realm of teaching and mentoring, particularly since his affiliation with the University of Nevada in Reno, after joining the Desert Research Institute in 1991. Previously, as a visiting assistant professor and faculty research associate at Arizona State University (1986-1990), he was involved with numerous student thesis and dissertation projects, especially the pioneering work that he conducted with students from ASU, in the Gran Desierto Sand Sea in northern Mexico. He currently supervises several Ph.D. and M.S. candidates at the University of Nevada in Reno in the Department of Geosciences and has assumed the lead and responsibility for developing a Geomorphology/ Quaternary Geology program. He is a superb mentor and we are certain that he will be the driving force behind that new program.

In all aspects, as a scholarly researcher, teacher, mentor, field scientist and a cherished colleague, we can only express our admiration to such a gifted person. He truly deserves a Career Award for his enormous accomplishments in aeolian geomorphology.

Acceptance by Nick Lancaster

Madam Chair, ladies and gentlemen, I regard it as a great honor to be awarded the Distinguished Career Award of the AAG Geomorphology Specialty Group. I want to thank all those who proposed me for the award, and the Committee for making a decision in my favor. The recognition of my peers is very important to me, especially as I have pursued a somewhat unconventional career path. I thank you all.

I also regard this award as a recognition for my subdiscipline. In many respects, aeolian geomorphology has been the Cinderella of geomorphology, with none of the stature of fluvial or glacial geomorphology. We have lacked the process-response models that characterize other fields. Discussion of aeolian processes has received at best a short section in the deserts chapter of many geomorphology and physical geography texts, aeolian talks end up in strange sessions at meetings, and our students (and ourselves) often find getting a good academic position difficult. I think that this pattern is changing, and this award to me is one sign of the emergence of aeolian geomorphology.

When Bill Nickling called to tell me about this award, I could hardly believe it. I had always assumed that distinguished career awards went to people who had been in the field for decades, had many students, and were enjoying the fruits of a long period of major contributions to the discipline. I guess that I am, in part, wrong, because I do not feel that I fit this model. When I found out about previous recipients of the AAG Geomorphology Specialty Group Distinguished Career Award, I felt even more humble and also privileged to be counted amongst such a group of talented and influential geomorphologists. I also feel humble when I think about all the other individuals who are at least as well qualified as I to receive this award.

My involvement in geomorphology has been supported by many organizations, without whom I could not have done what I have. Firstly, there are the funding agencies: NSF, NASA, National Geographic Society, who have supported my research. Secondly, there have been many individuals who contributed significantly to my career. These include my ex-wife, Judith, who was my field assistant for many years; Dick Grove at Cambridge, who introduced me to drylands geomorphology in the Kalahari; Mary Seely at the Desert Ecological Research Unit in Namibia, who provided me with a defining opportunity to work in a major dune system, and who established my role as a process geomorphologist; Ron Greeley at Arizona State University gave me the opportunity to come to the United States from South Africa and provided access to a rich variety of techniques and approaches in aeolian geomorphology. Thirdly, there are the many people with whom I have collaborated or worked with over the years. Although I really enjoy doing research on my own, collaboration is essential in the modern research world, where no-one can deploy all the techniques necessary to conduct cutting-edge research. Collaboration has been an enriching experience for me, and I especially want to thank Ann Wintle and Helen Rendell, Gary Kocurek, Bill Nickling, Vatche Tchakerian, and Cheryl McKenna Neuman for their companionship, inspiration, and insights as well as their direct contributions to our joint work. I look forward to many more fruitful collaborations in the future.

I understand that an occasion such as this affords the recipient of an award to say something about the contribution of the discipline. I have been fortunate to be able to conduct my research in a variety of locations from central Nevada to Antarctica and Namibia to Tunisia. These locations have all provided the opportunity to observe and be inspired by the beauty and wonder of the desert and to keep me in touch with the real world of landforms and geomorphic processes. It is this contact with nature that inspired many of the founders of our discipline and should, I believe, continue to inspire us in the sense of the re enchantment of geomorphology advocated by Baker and Twidale. I believe that my career has demonstrated that observations and measurements of landforms and processes can lead to models that serve in a meaningful explanatory role and that demonstrate the interconnected nature of all physical and human phenomena. I hope to continue in this way for many years to come.

To conclude, I would like to repeat my thanks to the Geomorphology Specialty Group for this great honor and to gratefully go forward in a spirit of wonder and enchantment to better understand this earth for the benefit of us all. Thank you very much.

Nicholas Lancaster - Research Professor, Quaternary Sciences Center, Desert Research Institute, UCCSN, 7010 Dandini Blvd, Reno, NV 89512,

Meetings

The **Fourth International Conference on Geomorphology** will take place in Bologna, Italy, August 28 - September 3, 1997. The **28th Annual Binghamton Symposium** ("*Changing the Face of the Earth: Engineering Geomorphology*") will be held as part of the conference. A series of pre- and post-conference scientific excursions and symposia are also scheduled.

The **1998 AAG meeting** will be held in Boston, March 25-29. Paper abstracts are due by Sept. 3, 1997 (!) and abstracts for posters due by Oct. 1. Program participation forms. Your editor has had no information about possible field trips associated with the meeting, and only one note from someone organizing a special geomorphology-related session. I hope you are out there! Our tradition of organizing special sessions (different individuals have come forward in different years to take the lead on this) had enabled us to have some decent meeting times and some continuity of days and rooms.

Here are some starters:

(1) Greg Pope is seeking anyone interested in submitting a paper and/or poster for a special session in Weathering Geomorphology at the Boston AAG meeting. Please contact Greg Pope at Montclair State University ASAP. If there is enough interest, we can follow through with an official program submission. We can entertain any thoughts on modifying our traditional forum (posters?, conducting a roundtable discussion?; themes?) Send your thoughts or suggestions via email (popeg@saturn.montclair.edu) or phone (973-655-7385)."

(2) I've heard that Jon Harbor has considered organizing a session focused on human impact (I think). He can be reached as jharbor@geo.purdue.edu.

(3) I'll be away (contemplating Mediterranean soil erosion) at the time of the paper deadline, but I will organize a paper-poster hybrid session for the Oct. 1 deadline on "Scale and Spatial Variability in Process Geomorphology." If you would like to be included in this session, send me your program participation form, your abstract and your money by Sept. 25. I will accept e-mailed abtracts with faxed forms showing payment by credit card. Send your stuff to me, Carol Harden, at Dept. of Geography, 408 G & G Bldg., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996-1420; fax # (423-974-6025); charden@utk.edu.

The **International Geological Correlation Program, Project 379**: "*Karst Processes and the Global Carbon Cycle*" along with Friends of Karst, will meet on September 23, 24, and 25, 1998, at Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, USA. The meeting will be hosted by the Center for Cave and Karst Studies at Western Kentucky University, Mammoth Cave National Park, and the Cave Research Foundation.

Expect two days of scientific presentations on various aspects of karst science, and a third day for a variety of surface and subsurface field trips in and around the Mammoth Cave System, (which at a current known length of over 560 km, is the world's longest known cave). For further information, or to be added to an email distribution list, please feel free to contact: Chris Groves [chris.groves@wku.edu] ph: 502-745-5974 fax: 502-745-6410 or Joe Meiman [jbmeiman@scrtc.blue.net] ph: 502-749-2508 fax: 502-749-2916.

NEWS OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Terry Toy (Univ. of Denver) is currently chairing a National Task Committee under the auspices of the Office of Surface Mining to develop a guidelines manual for the utilization of the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) on mined and construction lands. Knowing that some geomorphologists are also hockey fans, Terry writes that he was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the Western Collegiate Hockey Association at the annual league meeting in Marco Island, Florida this past April. He also received the "Faculty Award for Excellence" by the Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Engineering Division at the University of Denver for 1996-96 in May. Recent publications:

- Osterkamp, W.R. and T.J. Toy. 1997. Geomorphic considerations for erosion prediction: Environmental Geology, Vol. 29, 3/4, p. 152-157.
- Toy, T.J., S.D. Hasenjager, and S. McLeod. 1997. Assessment of hillslope designs using RUSLE at the Coeur Rochester Mine,Lovelock, NV. Presented at and contained in the Proceeding of the American Society for Surface Mining and Reclamation, May, 1997, Austin, TX.

Greg Pope (Dept. of Earth and Environmental Studies, Montclair State University) received a $6000 grant from several university sources to assess the impacts of weathering on petroglyphs and similar archaeological features. Field work this summer will be based out of Foz Coa, Portugal, in collaboration with Joao Zilhao, project coordinator at the Parque Arqueologico do Vale do Coa. The Foz Coa site, recently investigated by Ron Dorn and Fred Phillips and colleagues, harbors one of the most extensive displays of (arguably) Paleolithic rock art in Western Europe. The location was the center of controversy in recent years when a hydroelectric project threatened to flood the area.

Greg's project intends to address some of the controversies regarding the age and preservation of the petroglyphs in particular, and weathering rates in general. He will be accompanied by an MSU Geoscience graduate student, Deniz Altin, working on a parallel project. Under no duress from her advisor, Ms. Altin willingly chose to investigate the microbial endolithic organisms that are found in rock coatings. Her background in microbiology should apply very well to this venture. For her research proposal, Ms. Altin won the MSU College of Science and Math Sokol Award for International Graduate Study, a grant of $5000 toward her research. (The Earth and Environmental Studies Department has won this award in two of the past three years.)"

H. Jesse Walker is working with Louisiana State University to make his 40-year collection of research on the Colville River Delta available via the Internet. As of April, 1997, approximately 350 maps, slides, aerial photos, charts and diagrams had been digitized and 94 were on the Internet at LSU's Digital Library at (http://app1003.lsu.edu/lsudigit.nsf). The entire collection of 15,000 slides, 10,000 photos, 5,000 aerial photos, 75 publications, theses, dissertations, field notebooks,ecosounding traces, lab analyses and 16mm motion picture film dates back to the late 1950s. The 600 km2 Colville River delta, on the North Slope of Alaska, includes distributaries, lakes, dunes, sandbars and mudflats that exhibit permafrost and ice-wedge polygons features. Obtain further information from Lynn Hadden (LSU Office of Computing Services) at (504) 388-3725 (lynnh@lsu.edu) or Jesse Walker at (504)388-6130 (hwalker@lsu.edu).

Dissertations of New Ph.D.'s:

- Beebe, John T. 1997. Fluid Patterns, Sediment Pathways and Woody Obstructions in the Pine River, Angus, Ontario. Ph. D. Dissertation, Wilfrid Laurier University.
- Hyman, Glenn. 1997. Sediment transfer in the Rio Pacuare watershed and neighboring basins in Costa Rica. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Tennessee.
- Royall, P. Daniel. 1997. Lake-sediment-based evaluation of sediment yield and dynamics, Crooked Run drainage basin, Virginia. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Tennessee.

RESPONSE TO "The Road Not Taken"

[*Editor's note: the following open letter was submitted by Jacopo Pasotti in response to Bruce Rhoads' essay "The road not taken" in the previous GEOMORPHORUM. Readers are encouraged to contact Jacopo directly and to continue the dialog in future issues of GEOMORPHORUM. Students are encouraged to be part of this dialog.*]

Dear Bruce,
Thank you for your Note in Geomorphorum of February, 1997. Please accept my contribution referred to your Note. My name is Jacopo Pasotti and I graduated in Geology in July 1994 at the University of Milan, Italy, with a Master's thesis on periglacial environment development in Italian Central Alps. I will point out what geomorphology is, what people and environment share, what earth scientists would need (at least in my neighborhood) to understand environment, what I miss, what I wish for my future as a geomorphologist.

A geomorphology naïf portrait
I have chose to specialize in Geomorphology since essential to this branch of science is good observation skill. The former approach to environmental issues, from a geomorphological point of view, is by sight and inference. Definitions and rules on which to base surveys and relative analyses mostly depend on statements which are far less accurate than in other scientific disciplines and which are mostly based on philosophical foundations or assumptions. Beginning with a set of initial conditions, geomorphologists have to build a model playing through the different events which occurred in the past and might occur in a complex future scenario. All the Œspheres, (from atmosphere to lithosphere) interact on a surface, the Earth's surface, which plays the role of the interface among the natural agents. Reading the surface, geomorphologists may gather the scientific information essential to preserve natural resources, prevent natural hazards and manage fragile ecosystems. Observation, inference, experience and interpretation are common attributes needed in geomorphological research. Despite this, the discipline doesn't require you to be a wizard. Furthermore, you can notice that this is an unobtrusive way to do science and that large geographical and time scales are required.

The Environment
My Collins Gem cheap portable English Dictionary defines environment as "external conditions and surroundings in which men, animals and plants live." A book on International Environmental Rights is rather anthropocentric and emphasizes the human perspective, offering that environment is "...the set of physical, chemical, biological and social elements which influence individual and community health and life." Since

social elements are some of the environmental factors, it is important to integrate humans and environment.

Humankind and geomorphology

Owing to the previous considerations, geomorphologists aiming to investigate the environment need to have a good grasp of human history and behavior. Geomorphologists and geologists should be concerned with this human factor more than they normally are. This could lead to a more appropriate questioning and change in environmental issues. In my opinion, for a thorough understanding of the crucial morpho-genetic influence of people, we (the geomor-phologists) need to accomplish the hard task of coping with some studies on cultural, techno-logical and social relationships that influence the state of the environment and its processes. It is important to address complex environmental issues, taking into account the influence of cultural and social agents. Ignorance of cultural and social agents is one of the major gaps in geomorphological research. Undertaking research with cultural and social agents as one basic evaluation criteria will lead to a more accurate model of long-term changes in nature and could be a first step in raising the profile of geomorphological research.

Contemplating the state-of-the-art (in my neighborhood)

During my University courses, I was never told about the relationship between environment and humankind more than: society needs roads, roads cause land degradation, land degradation in road-building has to be avoided, let's work out something to bound the problem. In my Applied Geomorphology text book (300 pages), fewer than 20 pages are addressed to anthropic geomorphology. I have never been urged to attend any workshop or seminar concerned with geomorphology and history, culture or local policies. A course on the social impact (of dams, bridges, factories, land planning) was not offered. I have never been faced with sociological issues on human- or naturally- induced morphogenetic processes and social response. Collaborating with a company involved in EIA studies, I noticed how the social factor was barely on the horizon in their evaluations.

A suspicion.

Human-environment interaction has a long time frame (plurigenerational?), and a micro and macro-scale (from extremely local to planetary). The UE, the Rio Summit in 1992 and several other Governmental Institutions are mainly dealing with global issues, but local administrators and professionals only hear echoes of these strategic meetings. The Amazon's ecosystem has a very complex development and behavior, thus it requires funding, resources, many years and lots of meetings. On the other hand, there are rapidly changing economies and habitats (i.e., some valleys and mountain communities in the Alps) where there is a sort of deregulation. Some technologies could be applied at a local level. Knowledge and resources have to be accessible even from regions and people regarded as marginal. Such an approach can't be regarded as the province of ecologists or sociologists but has to be shared in a multi-disciplinary research environment. The non-reversibility of some geomorphological processes has clear consequences on the natural and the cultural estate and, therefore, on our lives.

Idealistic? Actually, yes. But it could soon change.

I am looking for someone who might be interested in supervising and funding a research study on scenarios (morphological scenario) for the future of extreme regions -- mountains or coasts that show rapid natural changes -- and supervising (and funding) a research study on new techniques applied to the management of fragile environmental processes at a local scale.

I am trying to create a group to apply natural and new techniques (such as bioengineering) to the conservation of nature and to natural hazards prevention and monitoring at a very local scale. Many companies work on big projects, such as tunnels; I would like to apply my knowledge to low-cost, little projects (i.e., damages caused by little paths in mountains). I proposed to a Mountain Community to create a network, via Internet, among the communities all over Italy (and Europe?) in order to share knowledge, experience and promote meetings and conferences. Shall I meet their interests?

I consider myself as a geomorphologist who is "in the game" to fuse human and geomorphological processes. Any suggestion are welcome.

-- **Jacopo Pasotti** - Via L. Anelli, 1, Milano. Italy, Tel.: + 39 2 58309074, jacopo@pobox.infomark.it

UNFINISHED AND ONGOING BUSINESS

Please contact Carol Harden, Jeff Lee or Bruce Rhoads about Geography in America to nominate yourself or someone else to be a (co)author of the new chapter on Geomorphology. Also, please send us your thoughts on points to be made in this chapter and on what you think are the boundaries of Geomorphology. [charden@utk.edu, adgjl@ttacs.ttu.edu (that's Jeff), b-rhoads@ux1.cso.uiuc.edu.

2. How should we give students financial awards to help them attend the Honolulu AAG meeting? Contact Ron Dorn (atrid@asuvm.inre.asu.edu).

3. Consider organizing a special session for the Boston AAG meeting.

4. Nominate geomorphologists for GSG awards and encourage students to apply for student awards. (Ron Dorn again).

5. Send your news, announcements, musings, shameless plugs, etc. to Jeff Lee, who will edit the next GEOMORPHORUM. (adgjl@ttacs.ttu.edu).

6. Get yourself connected to Geomorphlist so you don't miss the action! Contact the moderator (currently Jeff Lee at adgjl@ttacs.ttu.edu) and provide your name, mailing address, phone, fax, e-mail address and a few keywords to identify your interests in geomorphology for the Geomorphlist directory. You must also subscribe through the Listserver. (Also contact the Listserver if there is a change in your location or e-mail address.) You must contact the Listserver from the e-mail address you use to subscribe. To join, your message to the Listserver is: subscribe geomorph-l <yourname> (Note: do not type the brackets)

"Outside a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside a dog it's too dark to read."
-- Groucho Marx

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