GEOMORPHORUM

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

Issue No. 2, 1999 Basil Gomez, editor

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Basil Gomez

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

GEOMORPHORUM is archived at

http://www.aag-gsg.org

As this WWW thing now appears to be a fixture of academic, professional and personal life, the start of the new millennium seems an appropriate point in time for *GEOMORPHORUM* to make its debut as a web page. The format has deliberately been kept simple (by minimizing the number of internal links) to allow members to print a hard copy of the complete newsletter with the minimum of effort. This new mode of dissemination should allow our newsletter to become more inclusive, in as much as the electronic format should make it easier for individuals to submit copy (accompanied by suitably captioned illustrations), and thus help better achieve the newsletters goals. In so far as it may improve understanding of the internal workings of our community and to the health of geomorphology, individual members are encouraged to communicate news of new initiatives, appointments and promotions made in their Department orUniversity. The twice yearly appearance of *GEOMORPHORUM* makes it unsuitable for announcing new faculty positions or opportunities for graduate students but, if the membership requests such a service, a continuously updated link could be established in the future. Recent graduates (both Masters and Ph.D.) are, however, invited to provide their name, thesis title, date examined, five descriptive key words, a list of related publications, and an e- or snail-mail contact address. Those attending field meetings, conferences, or workshops are also reminded to submit reports of the event. The extent to which the newsletter's usual diet of comments by the GSG's chair, business meeting minutes, reports

and updates, notices of meetings, and *ad hoc* news from the membership will be supplemented by additional contributions is, of course, dependent on you, the reader. If you make a submission please bear in mind that the web is an interactive medium (*i.e.*, e-mail addresses and web site links should be incorporated in the text whenever possible; text should be submitted as a Word or WordPerfect files and illsutrations as .JPEG or .GIF files). Your comments and suggestions on ways in which the formatting/presentation/content could be improved are most welcome. There will inevitably be glitches as we explore this new publishing medium, so if you encounter a problem please bring it to my attention.

PEOPLE

Elected Officers (1999-2000)

Chair: *Joann Mossa* (University of Florida) mossa@geog.ufl.edu

Secretary/Treasurer: *Basil Gomez* (Indiana State University) bgomez@indstate.edu

Advisory Board (1999-2000)

Senior Advisor: *Bruce Rhoads* (University of Illinois) b-rhoads@ux1.cso.uiuc.edu

Carol Harden (University of Tennessee) charden@utk.edu

Jeff Lee (Texas Tech University) adgjl@ttacs.ttu.edu

Awards Committee (1999-2000)

Chair: *Bill Renwick* (Miami University) renwicwh@muohio.edu

Mike O'Neill (Utah State University) mikeo@ext.usu.edu

Karen Lemke (University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point) klemke@uwsp.edu

GSG BUSINESS

1) *GSG Awards*

GSG Graduate Student Research Awards

Each year the GSG awards two graduate student research grants to help cover the costs of data acquisition, field work, and laboratory analysis required to complete thesis research. The awards are $200 to a Masters student and $400 to a Ph.D. student. Eligible students are members of the Association of American Geographers and the GSG. Students should submit THREE copies of (i) a research proposal (approximately 5 pages in length) and (ii) two short letters of recommendation, before 1st February, 2000 to:

Bill Renwick – Chair GSG Awards Committee, Department of Geography, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056; Phone: (513) 529-1362; Fax: (513) 529-1948; E-mail: renwicwh@muohio.edu

The Grove Karl Gilbert Award for Excellence in Geomorphic Research

The Grove Karl Gilbert Award is presented to the author(s) of a significant contribution to the published research literature in geomorphology during the past three years. Only books, refereed journal articles, or monographs will be considered with an emphasis on refereed research articles. Nominations for the Grove Karl Gilbert Award remain active for two years. The nomination package should include (i) a copy of the relevant publication; (ii) a statement as to why the publication deserves the award, and (iii – optional) supporting letters from colleagues. These materials and any supporting documentation should be sent before 1st February 2000 to:

Bill Renwick – Chair GSG Awards Committee, Department of Geography, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056; Phone: (513) 529-1362; Fax: (513) 529-1948; E-mail: renwicwh@muohio.edu

The Melvin G. Marcus Distinguished Career Award

The Melvin G. Marcus Distinguished Career Award is presented to an individual who has made significant contributions to geomorphology over his/her career. Nominations for the Melvin G. Marcus Distinguished Career Award remain active for two years. The nomination package should include: (i) a brief description of the candidate's contribution to geomorphology; (ii) a brief biographic sketch; (iii) a select bibliography; and (iv) three letters of support from colleagues. These materials and any supporting documentation should be sent before 1st February 2000 to:

Bill Renwick – Chair GSG Awards Committee, Department of Geography, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056; Phone: (513) 529-1362; Fax: (513) 529-1948; E-mail: renwicwh@muohio.edu

2) *GSG Logo*

The GSG has a tradition of rewarding enterprise with pizza, and *Allan James* ajames@sc.edu has offered $15 (enough to purchase one such circular, cheesy consumable) to the individual who submits the best design for a GSG logo to him in advance of the next annual business meeting in Pittsburgh, in April 2000.

3) *GSG T-shirt*

The time seems right for creating a GSG T-shirt, and Joann Mossa mossa@geog.ufl.edu invites your thoughts concerning the graphics (logo??? see previous item) and wording on the T-shirt, which it is hoped will be available for purchase at the next annual business meeting in Pittsburgh.

4) *Chair's Commentary*

GEOMORPHIC OBSERVATIONS FROM "BUSMAN'S HOLIDAYS" ABROAD

The English have an expression called the "busman's holiday". This phrase describes the bus driver whose weekends and vacations resemble their workdays (*i.e.,* an excursion somewhere that the driver would normally bring passengers). As geomorphologists, we are often take such "holidays", visiting landscapes and making connections with other geomorphologists in between classes and during our breaks. Having spent much of the last year overseas, besides the contrasts in landscapes, it is evident to me that each place (country to university) has its own unique traditions and creates its sense of community in different ways. Such travel provides new perspectives on our own traditions within the GSG and geomorphology in the U.S. as a whole.

In Great Britain, the British Geomorphological Research Group (BGRG) has its own traditions that are independent of the Institute of British Geographers (IBG). They sponsor a general meeting in September and a field meeting in May. The field meeting varies in length but ranges from two days to a week. We hold many field trips in the U.S., most of which are held in conjunction with major conferences. Of the field trips that stand alone, the Friends of the Pleistocene (FOP) have several regional cells that regularly hold informal trips in Quaternary studies, but are not necessarily geomorphic. I bring up these examples because of the American Geomorphologic Field Group (AGFG), a group that group was active in the early to mid-1980s, and then became a memory rather than a tradition. Special strengths of this field group were that it emphasized geomorphology and drew a diverse of geographers and geologists, academics and agency personnel in geomorphology. Relatively little credit is given either in academia or agencies for hosting and organizing field trips, or arranging special conferences. Regardless, was this a tradition that we should have kept alive?

It is obvious that Poland has an active and organized geomorphic community http://hum.amu.edu.pl/~sgp/wel.htm and http://hum.amu.edu.pl/~sgp/gw/gw1.htm. At the invitation of a colleague who had been to Gainesville on a Fulbright, I visited him in Szezecin. Towards the end of my stay, I went to a gathering of Polish geomorphologists at a castle in the city to honor Karol Rotnicki, a well-respected and prominent Polish geomorphologist, on the occasion of his retirement. Although the conference was in Polish, and my language skills were limited, it was clear even to me what this conference was about. It was about honoring the best people in the profession. There was a continuous parade presentations, followed by toasts, hugs and kisses to a man that they felt had left a professional and a personal legacy. We dedicate some time to honor our colleagues during our business meetings, but the lengths that they go through there are far greater. Are we doing enough to honor and acknowledge the best people and major contributors in the profession?

In Brazil, geomorphologists have a strong camaraderie that is caring of one another, highly inclusive and very festive. Translations in two to three languages were common. Special detours were arranged to honor the requests of

guests. Some type of party (samba, pool, cowboy), was incorporated in the nightly activities. The students, who mostly had met one another for the first time, arranged most of these. In all fairness, it is difficult to compare an experience at a specialized international conference with our own circumstances. The GSG has minimal involvement of international visitors but has an appreciable base of student membership. Intermittently, we have an after-meeting party, sometimes constrained by the conference hotel rules. Others with more organizational history probably can provide partial answers, but are we doing enough to invite/include/welcome international visitors and guests? What could we do to increase international participation? What types of activities could we create to help students meet one another, as well as others in the profession? Do our students feel welcome and empowered to arrange for interactions activities besides giving papers? Should we allot more time for social interactions?

Occasional reflection is important, as we have many opportunities for involvement that must be balanced within our constraints, most notably time constraints. Most of my colleagues are perpetually busy, and are contributing in numerous and significant ways to the profession, including to the GSG. We have our own traditions and strengths in the U.S., from the Binghamton symposium, active involvement in journals, numerous professional organizations, *etc*. Still, I ask which traditions are most important to us? How could they be improved? Which new traditions do we wish to create? In what ways can we work together better within our group and with other organizations? What underutilized sources of energy can we use to strengthen our group and our discipline? If you have any thoughts to share, or any thoughts and experiences from your "busman's holidays", I'd like to hear them.

Joann Mossa (University of Florida)
mossa@geog.ufl.edu

NOTICES

1) *Geomorphology*

GSG members can subscribe to the journal Geomorphology at a discounted rate. For 2000, the GSG subscription rate for Volumes 30-35 (24 issues) is Dfl.184/US$93. Subscription information may be obtained from Elsevier Science, Regional Sales Office, P.O. Box 945, New York, NY 10159-0945 (1-888-437-4636) usinfo-f@elsevier.com. Additional information can also be found at http://www.elsevier.com/locate/geomorph.

2) *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*

GSG members may join the British Geomorphological Research Group (BGRG) http://boris.qub.ac.uk/bgrg at the overseas member rate of £35($57) for five years and thereby subscribe to Earth Surface Processes and Landforms at the discounted rate of $55($90) for Volume 12 (13 issues). The BGRG's membership secretary is John Wainwright (King's College London) john.wainwright@kcl.ac.uk. Subscription information may be obtained from John Wiley and Sons, Inc., Subscription Department, 605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158-0012 (212-850-6021) subinfo@wiley.com.

3) *Water Resources Research*

The American Geophysical Union's 'Direction and Review Committee', which makes suggestions about the way AGU journals can be improved, recently suggested that *Water Resources Research* encourage submissions in growth areas such as geomorphology. GSG members may be interested to know that *Water Resources Research* has an impact factor of 2.1, and that for the last six months of 1999, the acceptance rate was 43%, the median time receipt-to-notification was118 days, and the median time receipt-to-finalization was 136 days.

4) *GSG Sponsored and Related Sessions at the AAG Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh*

47. Physical Geography of the City I

Organizer: *Sue Grimmond* (Indiana University), *John Arnfield* (Ohio State University). *Lawrence Band* (University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill).

Chair: *Sue Grimmond* (Indiana University).

Wednesday, April 5 8:00 to 9:40.

85. Physical Geography of the City II

Organizer: *Sue Grimmond* (Indiana University), *John Arnfield* (Ohio State University). *Lawrence Band* (University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill).

Chair: *Tim Oke* (University of British Columbia).

Wednesday, April 5 10:00 to 11:40.

119. Physical Geography of the City III

Organizer: *Sue Grimmond* (Indiana University), *John Arnfield* (Ohio State University). *Lawrence Band* (University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill).

Chair: *Toby Carlson* (Pennsylvania State University).

Wednesday, April 5 12:00 to 1:40.

146. Coastal Geomorphology I

Organizer: *Paul Gares* (East Carolina University).

Chair: *Diane Horn* (Birkbeck College, London).

Wednesday, April 5 2:00 to 3:20.

154. Physical Geography of the City IV

Organizer: *Sue Grimmond* (Indiana University), *John Arnfield* (Ohio State University). *Lawrence Band* (University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill).

Chair: Lawrence Band (University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill).

Wednesday, April 5 2:00-3:40.

178. Coastal Geomorphology II

Organizer: *Paul Gares* (East carolina University).

Chair: *Douglas Sherman* (University of Southern California).

Wednesday, April 5 4:00 to 5:40.

237 Human Impacts in Geomorphology I

Organizers: *Jon Harbor* (Purdue University), *Richard Marston* (Oklahoma State University).

Chairs: *Richard Marston* (Oklahoma State University), *Jon Harbor* (Purdue University).

Thursday, April 6, 8:00 am to 9:40 am.

280. Human Impacts in Geomorphology II

Organizers: *Jon Harbor* (Purdue University), *Richard Marston* (Oklahoma State University).

Chairs: *Richard Marston* (Oklahoma State University), *Jon Harbor* (Purdue University).

Thursday, April 6, 10:00 am to 11:40 am.

285. Models of Streams and Slopes

Chair: *Tongxin Zhu* (University of Minnesota - Duluth).

Thursday, April 6, 10:00 to 11:40.

318. Stream Channel Response

Chair: *Ralph Scott* (Towson University).

Thursday, April 6 2:00 to 3:00.

321. Human Impacts in Geomorphology III

Organizers: *Jon Harbor* (Purdue University), *Richard Marston* (Oklahoma State University).

Chairs: *Richard Marston* (Oklahoma State University), *Jon Harbor* (Purdue University).

Thursday, April 6, 2:00 pm to 3:40 pm.

355. Stream Channel Geomorphology

Chair: *Patricia McDowell* (University of Oregon).

Thursday, April 6 4:00 to 5:20.

358. Human Impacts in Geomorphology IV

Organizers: *Jon Harbor* (Purdue University), *Richard Marston* (Oklahoma State University).

Chairs: *Richard Marston* (Oklahoma State University), *Jon Harbor* (Purdue University).

Thursday, April 6, 4:00 pm to 5:40 pm.

418. Sediment Transport in Fluvial Systems I.
Flow Hydraulics and Sediment Interaction

Organizer: *Michael Slattery* (Texas Christian University).

Chair: *André Roy* (Université de Montréal).

Friday, April 7, 8:00 to 9:20

457. Mountains II: Wind, Water Snow and Ice

Organizer: *Donald Friend* (Minnesota State University).

Chair: *Leland Dexter* (Northern Arizona University).

Friday, April 7, 10:00 to 11:40.

458. Sediment Transport in Fluvial Systems II.
Sediment conveyance through fluvial systems

Organizer: *Michael Slattery* (Texas Christian University).

Chair: *Robert Pavlowsky* (Southwest Missouri State University).

Friday, April 7, 10:00 to 11:20.

495. Sediment Transport in Fluvial Systems III.
Sediment storage and floodplains

Organizer: *Michael C. Slattery* (Texas Christian University).

Chair: *Scott Lecce* (East Carolina Univesity).

Friday, April 7, 2:00 to 3:20.

520. Floods and Wetland Restoration

Chair: *Nicholas Clifford* (University College, London).

Friday, April 7, 2:00 to 3:40.

534. Sediment Transport in Fluvial Systems IV.
Sediment storage and floodplains

Session Organizer: *Michael C. Slattery* (Texas Christian University).

Chair: *Michael C. Slattery* (Texas Christian University).

Friday, April 7, 4:00 to 5:00.

627. Geomorphology of Shorelines and Estuaries

Chair: *Dorothy Sack* (Ohio University)

Saturday, April 8, 10:00 to 11:40

659. Weathering Geomorphology

Organizer: *Steven Gordon* (US Air Force Academy)

Saturday April 8, 2:00 to 3:20

699. Sediments in Fluvial Systems

Chair: *Hsiang-te Kung* (University of Memphis)

Saturday April 8, 4:00 to 5:40

Illustrated Papers

51. Geomorphology and Water Resources

Chair: *Janet Gritzner* (Southa Dakota State University).

Wednesday, April 5 8:00 to 9:40.

421. Human Impacts in Geomorphology V

Organizers: *Jon Harbor* (Purdue University), *Richard Marston* (Oklahoma State University).
Chairs: *Richard Marston* (Oklahoma State University), *Jon Harbor* (Purdue University).

Friday, April 7, 8:00 am to 9:40 am.

Posters

124. Geomorphology and Water Resources

Wednesday April 5, 12:00 to 1:40.

191. Physical Geography of the City V

Wednesday, April 5 4:00-4:50.

Wednesday April 6, 7.30 pm **GSG Business Meeting** (preceded by cocktails at a place and time to be announced by *Andrew Marcus* (Montana State University) amarcus@montana.edu).

5) *International Symposium on Gully Erosion Under Global Change*

Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, April 16-19, 2000
Sponsored by the European Society for Soil Conservation (ESSC)

Provisional Program
Saturday 15 April: arrival of participants
Sunday 16 April: 08.30 - 10.30 registration; 10.30 - papers/posters
Monday 17 April: 08.30 - papers/posters; 13.30 - excursion; 19.30 - dinner
Tuesday 18 April: 08.30 - papers/posters; 19.30 - laboratory visit
Wednesday 19 April: 08.30 - 12.30 papers/posters and closing session

Registration Fee

The symposium registration fee, prior to February 1, 2000, will be 150 EURO (200 EURO thereafter). This fee will cover all conference materials, a book of abstracts, the symposium excursion (including excursion guide book) and the symposium dinner. Members of the ESSC benefit from a 20 EURO discount if the registration fee is received before February 1, 2000. Payment of registration fee should be made by bank giro transfer to account No. 431-0375601-84 (REGISTRATION K.U. LEUVEN - GULLY EROSION UNDER GLOBAL CHANGE) KBC Bank, Ladeuzeplein 15, 300 Leuven, Belgium. Registration fees are exclusive of bank transfer costs which should be paid by the participant.

Publications

Abstracts accepted for presentation during the symposium will be published in the book of abstracts made available to all participants at the start of the symposium. Selected papers will be published as special issues of journals (*e.g.*, *Catena* and *Soil and Tillage Research*).

Accommodation

Symposium participants are asked to book a hotel room themselves and are urged to make reservations for their accommodation as soon as possible. A list of hotels in and around Leuven may be obtained from the organizers. Send correspondence to International Symposium Gully Erosion Under Global Change, Attn: Jeroen Nachtergaele, Laboratory for Experimental Geomorphology, K.U. Leuven, Redingenstraat 16, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium. Phone: +32 16 32 64 26. Fax: +32 16 32 64 00. http://www.kuleuven.ac.be/facdep/geo/fgk/pages/expgeom.htm.

Jean Poesen and *Jeroen Nachtergaele*
jeroen.nachtergaele@geo.kuleuven.ac.be

6) *Weathering 2000*

Queen's University of Belfast, June 26th – 30th 2000

This is a British Geomorphological Research Group meeting designed to provide a major focus for all those interested in weathering of rocks and building stone, the processes involved and large-scale landscape implications.

Themes

Weathering in the landscape
Weathering processes
Measurement, monitoring and dating techniques
Monument and building stone weathering (SWAPNET meeting)
Applied and engineering aspects of weathering

Publications

Papers will be published in special editions of *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms* and

Geomorphology, and in a special conference proceedings volume.

Registration

On-line registration http://boris.qub.ac.uk/bgrg/diary/weathering2k.html Applicants may also register via e-mail weathering2k@qub.ac.uk or send correspondence to Weathering 2000, School of Geosciences, Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast BT7 1NN, Northern Ireland, UK. Tel: +44 1232 335140 Fax: +44 1232 321280. The cost of registration will be £90 for employed delegates and £45 for students and unwaged delegates. The fee will provide conference abstracts volume, refreshments, receptions, conference dinner and local field trips.

Alice Turkington (Queen's University Belfast) a.turkington@qub.ac.uk

7) *Other Meetings*

Modern and Ancient Ice-Marginal landsystems -- April 27-29
a.j.russell@keel.ac.uk

Variability in the Nature, Quality and Transport of River Sediment (IAHS) -- July 10-14 mstone@fes.uwaterloo.ca

The Extreme of the Extremes (IAHS) -- July 17-19
extremes2000@os.is

BGRG Annual Meeting -- September 12-24
g.wiggs@sheffield.ac.uk

Karst 2000 -- September 17-72
ukam@naim.jeo.hun.edu.tr

5th International Conference on Geomorphology -- August 23-28, 2001
http://www.soc.nacsis.ac.jp/jgu

REPORTS AND COMMENTS

1) *IAG Large Rivers Working Group*

The International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG) has begun a series of field trips on large rivers, organized by *Avijit Gupta* (University of Leeds) avijit@foxhill.demon.co.uk. Avijit has ably coerced individuals on a number of continents to lead field trips on large rivers for fellow geomorphologists. The first symposium and field conference was held in Goiânia, Brazil in the Araguaia River Basin in September 1999. This symposium was organized by *Edgardo Latrubesse* of UFG (Universidade Federal de Goiás). There were several papers and posters on large rivers from several continents, many of which focused on rivers in South America. The papers varied from global overviews to case studies regarding tectonic geomorphology, bank erosion, cross-sectional changes, sedimentary facies, paleohydrology, human impacts, floodplain evolution, flood hazards, and other topics. Latrubesse and *José Steveaux* (Universidade Estadual de Maringa) translated the major points of the conference papers between English and Portuguese. Steveaux, *Selma Simões de Castro* and *Alfredo Borges de Campos* (Universidade Federal de Goiás), and a number of students and agency representatives also were involved in the conference organization and field tour.

The Araguaia is the fourth largest drainage basin in South America and provides the bulk of the flow to the Tocantins before it discharges in the Pará, just south of the island of Marajó and not far from the mouth of the Amazon. We went from the headwaters to the middle Araguaia, covering about 3000 km of central Brazil on our tour. The upper Araguaia has spectacular gullies in unconsolidated sands. We followed a rope down the side of a large gully and walked along the channel downstream, examining seepage and how the excess sediment blocked some drainages and created lakes near the headwaters. Near here, we took a side trip to the Parque de Emas, where we saw a lot of wildlife (a boa, a wolf, rheas, deer and anteaters), and a variety of termite mounds. As we headed downstream and across the Araguaia on barge, the wildlife also included a dancing *Leszek Starkel* (Polish Academy of Sciences). In this area, we visited a hydrologic station and the Bananal Plain, which had spectacular caves and hummocky fluvial mounds of unknown genesis. Further

downstream, the Araguaia has tremendous sandbars, eroded banks and excellent exposures. A few caiman crocodiles and wild pigs accompanied us during portions of the sand bar research on motorboats. The timing of the meeting was excellent, coinciding with a 60-year low flow level. Our hosts arranged the cooperation, sponsorship and support of numerous environmental agencies (CENAQUA, CPRM, FEMAGO, ABEQUA, UGB), and were quite welcoming about developing and encouraging collaborations with others. Current plans are to publish selected conference papers in a special issue of Zeitscrift für Geomorphologie.

Also in Fall 1999, the IAG working group had a second field conference on the Yangtze, led by *Zhongyuan Chen* (East China Normal University) in late October-early November. The next symposium will feature a boat tour on the Mekong led by *Avijit Gupta* (University of Leeds) during 11-22 October 2000. Please contact Avijit at avijit@foxhill.demon.co.uk or School of Geography, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK if you are interested in attending. News regarding later fieldtrips will be forthcoming [I believe *Gerald Nanson* (University of Wollongong) gerald_nanson@uow.edu.au will be leading a fieldtrip in east-central Australia in July 2001 - Ed]. These fieldtrips represent a special opportunity to see some of the world's large rivers with fellow geomorphologists.

Joann Mossa (University of Florida)
mossa@geog.ufl.edu

2) *Geomorphology and the Geography and Regional Science (GRS) Program*

Over the past two years, I have had the pleasure of serving as Program Director of the Geography and Regional Science Program at the National Science Foundation. In an accompanying editorial (to be published in the January 2000, *AAG Newsletter*), I reflect on the experience of being a 'Beltway Insider ' and I make several personal observations about the NSF system of funding and how geographers should approach it. In this piece, I elaborate some additional points with relevance to geomorphologists and physical geographers.

While at NSF, I had several geographers ask me whether physical geographers were 'faring better' now that a geomorphologist was running the show. My response was a somewhat guarded 'yes.' To be sure, many physical geographers had NSF funding during my tenure as GRS Program Director, and many of the names will be familiar to us (these awards are a matter of public record, which can be accessed by doing a geography awards search at http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/). However, it would be virtually impossible to demonstrate that there were robust statistical trends pointing to enhanced funding for geomorphology recently given the pervasive problems of small sample size (number of awards) and of comparing apples versus oranges (type, duration, and total budget of awards). Moreover, to suggest that these awards were made as a result of direct intervention or manipulation of the system belies a misunderstanding of how the NSF system of peer review and grant funding operates (see my related comments in the AAG Newsletter). Perhaps the ONLY claim that I can make to better representation for physical geographers on the awards list is that physical geographers may have been less reluctant to submit proposals to the GRS Program knowing that I might be able to offer them a fair and substantive evaluation given my knowledge of the relevant expertise in the reviewer pool. Several times I heard stories about physical geographers having abandoned the GRS Program in the past because a grant proposal was rejected on the basis of uninformed and inflammatory reviewer comments or because the expectations were too high and the competition was too intense for an unsatisfactorily small amount of money. Some of these folks may have found success and satisfaction with other funding agencies, or alternatively, they may have just given up. In either case, the tenor of these comments is somewhat reminiscent of recent debates about why physical geographers have abandoned the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* as an outlet for their scholarly publications, and it behooves us to examine the criticisms carefully and with a touch of introspection. Let me do so now with a view toward fostering greater collective participation in a funding system that is basically ours to utilize and foster.

With regard to the charge that a past proposal may have been declined on the basis of 'poor' quality or inadequate reviews, I would argue that this is not a reasonable basis upon which to

abandon the system. Indeed, this is a very unusual, unfortunate, but inevitable, consequence of a competitive and highly regarded peer-review process. The process is taxing on everyone, especially the relatively small pool of available and willing reviewers. Recall that people with pending proposals are precluded from acting as an expert reviewer, and that physical geographers are often called upon to review for NSF Programs other than GRS. Thus, the four or five true experts in your field may not be available to review your proposal or they may otherwise by conflicted with you or your co-PIs because of prior collaborations. It is also true that the GRS Program seeks reviews from a fairly broad range of reviewers with varying expertise so that all attributes of each proposal are addressed. This means that not everyone is an expert in your sub-specialty of your sub-discipline, although each reviewer is selected for a specific reason and role. What may seem like tangential or uninformed comments to you may hold deeper meaning for the Program Director or the Advisory Panel. Then, consider that most academics are extraordinarily busy with their own research and teaching and with developing their own proposals. There remains precious little time to provide contemplative, constructive, and deeply reasoned assessments of someone else's grant proposal. Indeed, it is quite amazing that the vast majority of NSF reviewers manage to accomplish as much as they do, and that the reviews they provide are typically of the highest quality (this is especially true for geographers, in my experience).

Nevertheless, every once in a while, a comment is made that 'cuts to the bone' or worse, reveals a lack of engagement or a misinterpretation of some critical issue in the proposal. As a grant proposal writer with a huge stake in the outcome, are you not justified in being offended by casual and tangential comments? Well, yes and no. Yes, because the product of your intense labor deserves the utmost care and contemplation from experts in the best position to evaluate your work. No, because a single miscalculated comment does not necessarily negate all the positive (or critical) comments made about your proposal. No, because at one time or another, we have probably all made similar kinds of comments (whether on grant reviews, manuscript reviews, or simply on student papers or examinations) sometimes unwittingly. You know the scenario? It is late at night and the review is overdue by several days, and you just want to get it off your plate, so you hit the 'send' button without revisiting your review the next morning with a fresh perspective. So, when you receive a suite of reviews on a declined proposal, you should maintain a balanced perspective by weighing the negative and positive comments, you should read the comments in their proper context (is the phrasing overly hostile or simply critical, is the commentary constructive and therefore to be taken seriously, or is it flippant and misinformed and therefore to be ignored), and most of all, you should develop a thick skin and accept the inevitability that not everyone will be totally enamored with your approach to the topic.

It is worth bearing in mind that the NSF system is very competitive and that virtually all proposals submitted to the GRS Program are of exceedingly high quality. The evaluation process tends naturally to focus on and accentuate the negative attributes of proposals, especially during Advisory Panel discussions when a slate of 70-odd proposals needs to be whittled to a list of 10-15 priority candidates for funding. This is not to suggest that there are few redeeming features to the other 55-60 proposals, but simply that it is expedient to eliminate proposals from competition on the strength and substance of criticism rather than by debating the relative merits of the proposed research (in particular when the latter are not stated explicitly in the proposal or in the *ad hoc* reviews!). The Advisory Panel thoroughly discusses both the weaknesses and strengths of each proposal, but there is an implicit tendency of the entire peer-review process to focus on the negative rather than the positive. The system is not in place to flatter your ego, although it should ultimately foster improved performance by the research community. In this context, it should not surprise you if the ad hoc reviews and panel summaries are somewhat critical. They are not true reflections of the total 'worth' of you or your research agenda, but rather unabashed critical assessments of the weaknesses of your proposal instrument alone. In short, you ought not let a bruised ego deter you from learning from the experience, from fine-tuning your skills, and from playing the game again.

With regard to the complaint that the pool of available funds in the GRS Program is too small to support research in physical geography, I would contend that the times have changed. The average award size and duration is steadily increasing, and it is not unusual for the Program

to fund proposals over 2-3 years at a level of about $70,000 per year. This is a level of funding that is much greater than what could have been expected from the GRS Program a decade ago (for very good reasons), and it is on par with Programs such as Hydrology and Geology/Paleontology. As Program Director, I actively encouraged larger budgets and longer-duration projects. I did this because the only sure way of increasing the Program's annual budget was to argue to my Division Director that geographers were woefully under-funded. The best way of doing this was to demonstrate that there was a built-up demand for greater funding resources, which implies plenty of outstanding proposals with bigger budgets that go un-funded from year to year. The other (sharp) side of this two-edged sword is that the system responds somewhat sluggishly, and in the short term, there is not enough money to fund all of the good new proposals that are submitted. To whit, the proposal success ratio has to decline initially before new money can be justified, and this is why geographers have to be cognizant of the long-term strategy involved and to be patient while the Program grows its resources. It serves the collective poorly to abandon the GRS Program even if you do get rejected and even if the overall odds of getting a proposal funded are better elsewhere. We need the very best, cutting-edge research proposals to be submitted to the GRS Program if it has any hope of expanding its domain. The same holds true if physical geography is to maintain a place of prominence in the overall funding portfolio of the GRS Program. We can choose to play, we can find another game, or we can quit. The choice is ours. I would contend that the same is true of the *Annals*.

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3) *NSF Advisory Panel for Geography and Regional Science (GRS)*

As a recent member of the NSF Advisory Panel for Geography and Regional Science I encourage U.S. geomorphologists to consider applying to this program for funding. During the two years I served on the panel I was surprised by the small number of proposals from geomorphologists. The panel was certainly very supportive of physical geography in general and geomorphology in particular. The program is competitive (about 20% of submissions are funded), but overall the proposals from physical geographers faired as well as or perhaps slightly better than those from other areas of the discipline. Although the emphasis is on proposals that address research problems of fundamental theoretical importance, those that integrate such problems with applied outcomes usually are viewed most favorably both by reviewers and the panel. The panel also recognizes that many studies in physical geography, especially those with substantial field components or specialized equipment needs, have comparatively large price tags. Funding levels of $150,000 to $250,000 for 2 to 3-year projects are not out of the question for experienced investigators. Junior investigators may want to consider a more modest initial request ($25,000 - $50,000). In all cases, applicants are encouraged to contact the Program Directors *Nina S. Lam* nlam@nsf.gov or *Thomas J. Baerwald* tbaerwal@nsf.gov prior to submitting a proposal. More details can also be found on the GRS web page http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/bcs/geograph/start.htm.

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4) *MARGINS Sediment/Stratigraphy Program, Source-to-Sink Initiative*

As some members of the GSG will be aware, MARGINS is a program that seeks to understand the complex interplay of processes governing continental evolution: the premise being that Margins are where the action is! By promoting research strategies that redirect traditional approaches, the MARGINS research initiative, which will be supported by substantial NSF funding over the next decade, provides a focus for co-ordinated, interdisciplinary research into the processes that govern the evolution of continental margins that is undertaken outside the existing core programs. To do this MARGINS seeks to foster interest in a relatively few focus areas subsumed within four science initiatives ('Rupturing Continental Lithosphere', 'Seismogenic Zone Experiment', 'Subduction Factory' and 'Sediment Dynamic and Strata

Formation'). The latter ('source-to-sink') initiative comprises three focus areas; two primary, New Guinea (Fly, Markham and Sepik Rivers) and New Zealand (Waipaoa/Waimata and Clutha, Waitaki and Rangitata Rivers); and one ancillary, southeast Alaska. It is of especial significance to the geomorphological community at large because these study areas provide an opportunity for geomorphologists to obtain funding for co-ordinated, interdisciplinary studies conducted within the MARGINS framework. This represents a significant advance in what Church *et al.* (1985, *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*, 10, 539-540) termed 'Geomorphological Sociology'; in as much as it offers the geomorphological community the opportunity to make a significant contribution to 'big science', and will permit individuals to participate in field, laboratory and theoretical studies that are supported by more resources and reinforced by a greater range of observations than are normally possible.

Research programs that are part of the source-to-sink initiative will focus on the dispersal system that transfers particulates (sediment and nutrients) from mountain tops to abyssal plains; though the expectation is that budgets will be closed at a variety of time scales and reservoirs that operate over long time scales will force lower resolution measurements. There is, therefore, the potential for individuals who represent the entire spectrum of the geomorphological community (from Quaternary to Process Geomorphologists, regardless of whether they are interested in making field, observations, undertaking laboratory experiments or developing a theoretical approach) to become involved in the MARGINS Sediment/Stratigraphy Program.

An education/planning workshop will be held during the second week of September. This will assist prospective PIs who have not previously worked in New Guinea, New Zealand or Alaska with the development of research proposals for submission to NSF in advance of the next (January 15, 2001) deadline.

Information about the focus and ancillary sites, and the MARGINS initiative can be found at

MARGINS HOMEPAGE
http://www.soest.hawaii.edu/margins/Home.html

SOUTHEAST ALASKA
http://depts.washington.edu/qrc/margins

NEW GUINEA
http://www.vims.edu/margins

NEW ZEALAND
http://www.indstate.edu/gomez/margins.html

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MISCELLANY

1) *Links to Related Sites*

American Geophysical Union
http://earth.agu.org/kosmos/homepage.html

Association of American Geographers
http://www.agu.org/

British Geomorphological Research Group
http://boris.qub.ac.uk/bgrg

Canadian Geomorphological Research Group
http://office.geog.uvic.ca/dept/cgrg/cgrg.htm

European Union of Geosciences
http://www.cla.sc.edu/geog/gsgdocs/Newsletter/
http;/eost.u-strasbg.fr/EUG

Geological Society of America
http://www.cla.sc.edu/geog/gsgdocs/Newsletter/
http;//www.geolsociety.org

Geomorphology Speciality Group Homepage
http://www.cla.sc.edu/geog/gsgdocs

International Association of Geomorphologists
http://www.homepage.montana.edu/~ueswl/geomorphlist/index.htm

International Union for Quaternary Research
http://inqua.nlh.no/

Quarternary Geology and Geomorphology Division – Geological Society of America
http://www.ocean.odu.edu/

2) *GSG Members-- E-mail Addresses*

Please take the time to ascertain yours and that of colleagues you communicate with frequently is present and correct; it is difficult to keep track of the real and virtual movements of some 400 GSG members.