Letter from the Chair

Outlined throughout this Newsletter are several important issues for the UGSG, three of which I would like to highlight. First, thanks to the organizational efforts of Damaris Rose, we have fifteen special sessions for April’s AAG meeting in Phoenix. Approximately one half will be co-sponsored by other Specialty Groups. Many thanks to all the organizers and participants.

Second, the Nominating Committee has submitted a list of strong candidates for the UGSG Board of Directors (1988-90). Elections will be held in March. Note that for the first time student representatives to the Board will be elected (as reported in the minutes of the 1987 Business Meeting in the July 1987 Newsletter).

Third, the UGSG will be represented in the volume, Geography in America, edited by Gary Gaile and Cort Willmott. This autumn Martin Cadwallader, Andrew Kirby, and Sallie Marston volunteered to write the chapter. The Board appreciates their offer, and urges you, as UGSG members, to contact the authors with any input that you might want to make.

If there are any questions or comments that you may have about Newsletter items or Board activities, or if there are suggestions for issues to be discussed at the Business Meeting in Phoenix, please feel free to contact me or any member of the Board.

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Chairperson

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Thanks...

Production costs for this issue of the UGSG Newsletter were paid by your membership dues. Mailing costs were supported by the Department of Geography at the University of Kentucky.

Sine Qua Non

UGSG members are reminded that in order to keep your membership in the specialty group you must designate the UGSG on your AAG membership renewal form each year. Do not confuse the specialty group codes with the area codes or the topical specialty codes. We receive a rebate from the AAG only for those who have paid their dues by January 1, 1988.

1988 Phoenix Meeting Sessions

The following list of UGSG sessions have been submitted to the AAG Central Office. Presenters denoted by an asterisk are UGSG Distinguished Guests for the 1988 meetings.

Changing Patterns in Contemporary American Metropolises

Contemporary Issues in Factorial Ecology
Foundations for National Urban Policy
in a New Orleans Neighborhood," Lawrence Knopp (Univ. of Iowa) and Mickey Lauria (Univ. of New Orleans).

Territorial Politics and Fiscal Policy I

Territorial Politics and Fiscal Policy II

Urban Change Under Industrial Restructuring

Urban Development in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union

Who Will Mind the Baby? Spatial Implications of Child-Care

Working Women: Implications of Women's Work
Nominating Committee Report

The 1988 Nominating Committee has proposed the following slate of candidates for positions as Officers and as members of the Board of Directors:

**Chairperson:** Hazel A. Morrow-Jones (Univ. of Colorado)

**Vice-chairperson:**
- Susan Hanson (Clark Univ.)
- Michael Storper (Univ. of California, Los Angeles)

**Board of Directors:**
- Diana DeAre (U.S. Bureau of the Census)
- Marie Howland (Univ. of Maryland)
- Andrew Kirby (Univ. of Colorado)
- David Ley (Univ. of British Columbia)
- John Mercer (Syracuse Univ.)
- Erica Schoenberger (Johns Hopkins Univ.)
- Susan Elliott (McMaster Univ.)
- David Organ (Univ. of California, Berkeley)
- Susan Ruddick (Univ. of California, Los Angeles)
- Tanya Steinberg (Rutgers Univ.)
- Enid Wray (Ohio State Univ.)

**Student Board Members:**
- Andrew Kirby (Univ. of Colorado)
- John Mercer (Syracuse Univ.)
- Erica Schoenberger (Johns Hopkins Univ.)

In accordance with the resolution passed at last year's Business Meeting (see the July 1987 Newsletter), the 1988 Board will be comprised of two student members. The student with the greatest number of votes will serve two years on the Board. The runner-up will hold a one year position. Thereafter, all student seats will run two years with one of the two seats vacated yearly. Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson serve one year; members of the Board serve two years.

In addition to these nominees, UGSG members may nominate candidates by petition for all positions. Petitions must be signed by at least twenty current members of the UGSG and must be received by 15 February 1988 by the current UGSG chairperson, W. Randy Smith, Department of Geography, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210. Phone: (614) 292-0178. The election will be conducted through mail ballot in the March 1988 UGSG Newsletter.

This year's Nominating Committee was chaired by Peter O. Muller (Univ. of Miami) and included Vera Chouinard (McMaster Univ.) and Tom A. Clark (Univ. of Colorado, Denver).

Guest Editorial

[This and future issues of the Newsletter will include invited editorials, the purpose of which is to stimulate dialog and provoke thought (and controversy?) in a format where brevity is at a premium. Neil Smith kindly agreed to inaugurate the column. Ed.]

**A New Conservatism?**

Fundamental debates periodically emerge that alter the direction and agenda of a discipline or sub-discipline. One such debate is currently emerging in the broad terrain of urban, regional and industrial geography, but since much (but not all) of it is British in origin and perhaps specific to British circumstances, and since it is barely yet in print, it may not have impinged on much North American research. In large part it is taking place in the pages of Society and Space and Antipode, but it is likely to have a broader effect on the politics of geographic research.
By the mid 1970s, traditional ecological and positivist approaches had been sufficiently challenged that, unrealized by many of the participants, marxist theory came to define a considerable range of the research frontier. By the early 1980s, however, there was a gathering discontent with marxist work, reflecting both a substantive critique and a reaction to the pronounced rightward shift in British politics. Marxism was criticized as overly structuralist, too unspecific methodologically, and theoretically too general. In response, and not at first overtly connected, emerged the structurationism of Giddens, the realism of Sayer and others, and a clear focus on localities as typified by the ESRC initiative on changing urban and regional systems. The focus was toward small areas and away from global or even national questions; toward an insistence that all results be verified empirically, and away from any discussion of underlying forces; and toward a focus on agents rather than structures. The global scale, conceptions of social structure, and dialectical reasoning were largely eclipsed from the research frontier as structurationism, realism, and localism became increasingly intertwined and mutually supportive.

At times, this critique and narrow reconstruction tended toward a rather unseemly game of hunt-the-structuralist-functionalist often pursued by participants blithely ignorant of the definitions or difference between structuralism and functionalism, and equally oblivious to the historical and philosophical reductionism implied by confusing the political tradition of marxism with the linguistic origins of structuralism. Not all of the critique was so misguided, but even the more thoughtful retreats from marxism, theory and class analysis nonetheless contributed to a new conservatism that is evident throughout the social sciences. It is a negative conservatism insofar as very few erstwhile marxist academics have come to embrace the radical vision of Thatcher or Reagan, but given the political retrenchment in the wider society there is actually the danger that a new generation of reactionary ex-marxist could emerge. These are some of the larger questions at stake in the emerging debate.

Personally, I think it is important to acknowledge the severe limitations of a localist, increasingly empiricist and tendentially individualist methodology -- in short a new empiricism. The problems with such an approach are more and more apparent intellectually, and in a practical sense were only accentuated by the financial meltdown of October 19th when we saw the global markets collapse like so many geographical dominoes behind the rising sun. To understand the geography of political, economic and social transformation triggered by financial collapse, and in all likelihood depression, a global perspective, theoretically informed and cognizant rather than dismissive of the powers and weaknesses of established structures, will be indispensable. The strength of marxism owes a lot to this kind of focus, and to its advocacy of "integrative" analysis that seeks to combine rather than isolate different places and forces of change. The earlier critiques suggested many problems with the way in which marxism was being rediscovered and refashioned to account for contemporary patterns and processed of change, but this would surely be the wrong time to dismiss out of hand a body of theory built on the understanding of the inherent crisis tendencies of capitalism, a sense of the alternative possibilities for resolving economic crisis (and their potentially devastating social effects), and a comprehension of class (as well as race and gender) differentiation along which lines the human geography of crisis will be most keenly felt.

Neil Smith
Rutgers Univ.

Bibliography
Society and Space, 5(3) and 5(4), 1987.

**The UGSG and Geography in America**

A call for UGSG contributors to Gary Gaile (Univ. of Colorado) and Cort Willmott's (Univ. of Delaware) *Geography in America*, was made at the 1987 UGSG Business Meeting. Recently, Martin Cadwallader, Andrew Kirby, and Sallie A. Marston agreed to prepare the UGSG materials for the volume, which is to be organized according to AAG specialty groups. UGSG members interested in having an input should contact Cadwallader (Dept. of Geography, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706), Kirby (Dept. of Geography, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309), or Marston (Dept. of Geography and Regional Development, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721). They will present a draft of the urban geography contribution during one of the Gaile/Willmott special sessions in Phoenix.

**Sixth Annual Urban Geography Dissertation Award**

The UGSG of the AAG announces its Sixth Annual Dissertation Competition for recent doctoral dissertations in urban geography. Dissertations addressing any aspect of urban geography and submitted for a degree awarded during the 1987 calendar year are eligible. Previous winning dissertations have examined the spatial structure of local labor markets, the casual poor in Third World cities, family and class in a new industrial city, historical districts, the role of 19th century political machines in building urban infrastructure, and the relationship between home ownership and political sentiment.

Individuals submitting dissertations are strongly encouraged to present a paper at the annual meeting of the AAG. The winner will be announced at the AAG meeting in Phoenix, where she/he will receive a selection of books courtesy of John Wiley & Sons. The dissertation review committee is composed of Susan Christopherson (Cornell Univ.), chair; Janet Washbon (Urban Information Consultants); and Eric Sheppard (Univ. of Minnesota). To enter the competition please send one copy of your dissertation and a dissertation abstract to: Susan Christopherson, Department of Planning, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853. Entries should be received by December 1.

**Young Urban Geographers at Rutgers University**

[This issue's column was contributed by Tanya Steinberg. Ed.]

Paul Caris is working on urban revitalization in northern New Jersey with a focus on gentrification in Newark and Jersey City, New Jersey. His masters thesis was on the impacts of industrial restructuring in Youngstown, Ohio. Louise Cook has worked on the effects of arson on gentrification and the effects of economic and industrial restructuring on employment patterns and social change. Her masters thesis is on health provision at northern New Jersey worksites. Deborah Popper is concentrating on the historical process of urban development with a focus on the growth of 19th Century manufacturing cities like Patterson and Newark, New Jersey. Laura Reid is presently interested in the effects of economic and industrial restructuring on the relocation of corporate headquarters, mainly the movement of headquarters from New York City to Stamford, Connecticut. She has also investigated the role of the female labor force and telecommunications on the relocation of industry. Tanya Steinberg is currently working on the process of disinvestment and reinvestment in inner-city areas and has concentrated her most recent research in Hoboken, New Jersey. She is also interested in gentrification as part of a larger economic and social restructuring process. Leyla Vural is interested in the location and relocation of industry and the effects on labor relations. She also maintains a focus on the relationship between housing and class in urban areas.
Recent Books of Interest


IGU Working Group on the Dynamics of Land Use Systems

Dr. R. D. Hill (Univ. of Hong Kong) is requesting assistance in gathering comparable data on land use changes for as many cities as possible throughout the world. The aim of the project is to measure the growth in built-up areas and population for cities between 1950 and 1980. Areal data for both the contiguous urbanized area and its population are requested to be accurate to within 100 hectares or better for as close as is possible to the dates encompassing the thirty year period. Data and maps of the land use changes will be reported in a research report prepared by Dr. Hill. Volunteers are especially needed for cities in the following areas: all Caribbean countries; all countries south of the Sahara (except Ethiopia, Cameroon, Nigeria, Kenya); all Gulf states (except Qatar); all Latin American states (except Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, and Ecuador); Ireland, Greece, Austria, Iceland, Jordan, Libya, Luxemmbourg, Morocco, Rumania, Portugal, and Nepal.

Any urban geographers interested in contributing to this project are urged to write: Dr. R. D. Hill, c/o Department of Geography, Victoria University of Wellington, Private Bag, Wellington, New Zealand. A more complete description of the data needs can be obtained from: Thomas J. Baerwald, Science Museum of Minnesota, 30 East 10th Street, Saint Paul, MN 55101. Phone: (612) 221-9488.

Research Fellowships/Associateships for Urban Geographers

The American Statistical Association/NSF/Census Bureau research program is currently seeking applicants for 1988-89 fellowships and associateships. The program brings economists, statisticians, and geographers together to do collaborative research with Census Bureau personnel in a wide variety of areas related to demographic/economic analysis and statistical methodology.

Geographers are encouraged to participate in this program. Recognized researchers and graduate students may apply. Applications are due January 8, 1987 for fellowships, and February 15, 1987 for associateships. Additional information can be obtained by writing to: Arnold Reznik, Coordinator, ASA/NSF/Census Research Program, Bureau of the Census, SRD Room 3514-3, Washington, D.C. 20233. Phone: (301) 763-3846.

Your Newsletter

Do you have an item for the next issue of the newsletter? If so, you are encouraged to send it 'express' to the editor via BITNET (address: GEG172@UKCC). Or send it the old fashioned way to: John Paul Jones, III, Department of Geography, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506. Phone: (606) 257-6950.