Letter from the chair:

If you’re tired of the types of ‘fluff’ stories that take up most of the space in local newspapers, a good place to look for more gritty and hard-hitting urban news is the metropolitan papers put out by the poor and homeless. Not only are these types of newspapers good vehicles for aspiring writers who want to “make a difference,” they are also excellent sources for the types of urban events and processes that are generally edited out of more mainstream news channels. “Real Change,” the Seattle-area newspaper published by the Real Change Homeless Empowerment Project, is part of a wider non-profit program which includes peer support groups for homeless writers, a Homeless Speakers Bureau and other organizing projects. In nearly every weekly issue there is a well-researched article about a current ‘urban’ issue, from transportation to gentrification to homelessness to finding housing for ex-offenders (see, e.g. “Released to the Streets: Finding Housing for Ex-Offenders is a Battle,” Real Change, Aug, 17-23, 2005, p. 1). I encourage graduate students in particular, to purchase and read these papers whenever possible, and to consider publishing in them.

Continued on page 2

Questions and Concerns: Beginning a discussion on the present and future of urban geography

By: Eugene McCann

Eric’s invitation to write a column on “where the sub-discipline of urban geography has been, where it is going, or a combination of both topics” has left me with somewhat mixed feelings. It’s nice to be asked, of course. On the other hand, summarizing the sub-discipline’s past is a monumental task matched only, perhaps, by the job of prognosticating on its future. The realization that my contribution would be the first published in this series didn’t do anything to settle my nerves. Having said this, I am happy to be involved in a discussion of the state of the urban geography. I will take the opportunity, as the first contributor, to spend some time ‘agenda setting.’ I will then raise a specific issue that I hope will spur more conversation.

Questions
The discussion of the character of the sub-discipline has, at least four of dimensions, some of which have recently been pursued in the literature but all of which could endure further elaboration. First, the discussion has an element of intellectual history about it. An interesting series of articles in Urban Geography, covering the last four decades, engages in this task (1960s: Vol. 22, No. 6 (2001); 1970s: Vol. 23, No. 5 (2002); 1980s: Vol. 24, No. 4 (2003); 1990s: Vol. 24, No. 5 (2003)). But, as Johnston’s critical commentary, in Vol. 25, No. 3 (2004), suggests, such histories are never settled or complete.

Second, taking the pulse of the sub-discipline also necessarily involves envisioning its intellectual future(s): What should be the urban geographer’s object of study? Are certain cities more replete with key urban geographical processes than others? What, if anything, are ‘key urban geographical processes’? Is there such a thing as an ‘urban geographer’ or are there just various types of geographers who happen to do work in cities? These sorts of questions could go on and on and many of them, while having been debated in the literature, require ongoing comment.

Continued on page 3
Letter from the chair … continued from page 1

My encouragement to grads to consider writing short pieces for venues outside of academia is part of a larger project I’m engaged with that seeks to foster more connections between universities and the wider communities in which they’re located. I am particularly interested in encouraging students (and other faculty) to write for broader audiences. It seems to me that our urban-related knowledges and understandings are particularly relevant to those outside of the university and we should make every effort to publish in non-academic places whenever possible. I’ll be hosting a panel at the upcoming AAG in Chicago entitled “Being and becoming a public scholar,” and I welcome any feedback, suggestions, comments and/or linked panels from all interested parties.

As courses resume this is a good time for faculty to remind students about our many competitions and awards. Below* is a list of awards and the people to whom papers and theses, etc. should be sent for adjudication. Please note that we have a NEW award: the UGSG Fellowship. Note also that the costs of mailing dissertations can be refunded in the case of financial need.

• Urban Geography Graduate Student Fellowships, 2006
  Deadline: January 31st, 2006
• Dissertation Competition
  Deadline: January 31st, 2006
• Masters Thesis Competition
  Deadline: January 31st, 2006
• Student Paper Competition
  Deadline, February 15th, 2006
• UGSG Glenda Laws Undergraduate Paper Award
  Deadline, February 15th, 2006
• Student Travel Support AAG-Chicago

Katharyne Mitchell
August, 2005

[*Editor’s note: a full description of all these competitions and awards can be found on page 4.]

FROM THE EDITOR	INTRODUCING IN CONVERSATION

With this issue, I am happy to introduce a new feature column entitled, In Conversation. This feature column is intended to engage dialogue and discussion pertaining to various urban geography issues. Generally articles published in this column will be invited contributions or open solicitations, depending upon the theme. Currently I have invited several urban geographers, of various ranks, to submit short essays on their perspectives of the past, present, or future of the Urban Geography sub-discipline; this is borne out of the recent AAG Centennial celebration in Philadelphia 2004. Comments and responses to the published articles are encouraged! Concise responses written in a spirit of fair debate and discussion will be published in subsequent issues of the Newsletter. Please take a moment to read Eugene McCann’s insightful essay in this issue. Be looking for other essays in forthcoming issues! —Eric Boschmann, UGSG Newsletter Editor, boschmann.1@osu.edu

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UGSG Website:
www.uwm.edu/Dept/Geography/ugsg/
Third, the sub-discipline’s relationships to and influence on the everyday actualities of cities – their politics, economies, cultures, environments, governance, and cross-scalar connections, among others – and its public image are also issues worthy of discussion. Many geographers contribute greatly to the cities they study and to pressing urban questions more generally. Yet, the character and effect of our own contributions are not major themes in the academic literature. Regarding the sub-discipline’s public image: if it has one at all, I wonder if it is what we want it to be? Are cultural geographers happy with the way their sub-discipline was portrayed in David Brooks’ recent New York Times op-ed piece, “All cultures are not equal” (August 10, 2005)? What might a similar column say about urban geography? Does the prospect of a ‘Brooksian’ take on our sub-discipline concern (all or some of) us? Why?

Finally, any discussion of the future of urban geography must also attend to the structural and processual issues associated with its organization. We might discuss the importance of linkages between the North American urban geographers and those in other parts of the world, links the British urban study group has worked hard to foster in recent years; we might identify ways to increase levels of diversity, broadly defined, in urban geography. More specifically, we might discuss the importance of membership levels, student paper prizes, participation in Specialty Group elections and so on. It is to these nitty-gritty questions and to the ‘critical infrastructure’ provided to the sub-discipline by the Specialty Group that I will now turn.

Concerns
On the face of it the Urban Geography Specialty Group is very healthy. It is one of the largest in the AAG, with 1,200 members (710 student, 490 non-student), and a Newsletter distributed via the UGSG electronic Discussion Community site at www.aag.org to 1,465 subscribers and via the URBGEOG listserv to 737 subscribers (admittedly, these two groups overlap considerably). The Specialty Group sponsors or co-sponsors a large number of sessions at the AAG conference each year (36 in 2005) and the group’s finances are sound, thanks to the responsible management of current and past Treasurers and Chairs. It provides, in other words, a strong organizational basis for the sub-discipline’s various activities, from research and teaching, to outreach. Yet, I want to suggest that while these markers of success cannot be argued with, they only paint a partial picture. Let’s look at some other facts: the last election for board members garnered a grand total of 6 (six!) votes; the current Vice Chair (that would be me) was acclaimed, not elected; submissions to our student dissertation, thesis, and paper competitions are chronically low.

Given this democratic, or participatory, deficit, I want to end this column as I began it: by expressing some nervousness. The Specialty Group is an important and vibrant part of the sub-discipline. My engagement with it as a graduate student and as a faculty member has been extremely valuable to my professional development. I worry both that others are missing out on their chance to enjoy its benefits and support as they contribute to urban geography and I am concerned that the Specialty Group is starved of a great deal of talent and good ideas as a result of low participation in its basic functions (a concern that is in no way intended to reflect badly on current or past boards).

Now, there are many reasons why participation is low. Some of these relate to the workings of the Specialty Group itself. For instance, low participation in student paper competitions may be a result of a lack of effective advertising. At our meeting in Denver the board took steps to address this situation and others. Time will tell if these measures will yield results. Also, time and resource pressures play a role in the decisions we all make about participation. Juggling jobs and lives is never easy. Furthermore, the increasingly extended and hectic schedule of the AAG meetings understandably militates against participation in one more extra event like the UGSG Board Meeting. Yet, having said all this, I think that the issue of low levels of participation in the Specialty Group and the related question of how to increase participation is worthy of continued attention and discussion as part of wider conversations on the past, present, and future of urban geography. In that spirit I will end with this: Urban geography in North America is markedly weakened by a lack of broad participation in our Specialty Group. Discuss.

Eugene McCann is an Assistant Professor of Geography at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia. He is a former student paper prize-winner, board member, Newsletter editor, and current Vice Chair of the Urban Geography Specialty Group.

Email: emccann@sfu.ca.
AWARD AND COMPETITION OPPORTUNITIES

Urban Geography Graduate Student Fellowship, 2006
Each year, the Urban Geography Specialty Group will award one or more fellowships, each approximately $500, to support urban-oriented doctoral research. Fellowships are intended to provide targeted support at a relatively early stage of doctoral dissertation research - while also ensuring that award recipients have well-developed research proposals that have a high likelihood of completion. Fellowship support may be used for any reasonable expenses associated with a research proposal. Eligibility is limited to current student members of the Urban Geography Specialty Group who will have completed all Ph.D. requirements except the dissertation by the end of the semester or term in which any award is approved. Dissertation supervisors must certify eligibility. Submit applications by email to Elvin K. Wyly, Secretary/Treasurer, ewyly@geog.ubc.ca, by January 31, 2006. Applications received after this date cannot be considered. Award decisions are made by the Board of the Urban Geography Specialty Group on the basis of the quality and feasibility of the research proposal. Applicants will be informed of the award decisions shortly before the AAG Annual Meeting. Applications are available from the UGSG website, http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Geography/ugsg/, or by e-mailing Elvin K. Wyly.

Dissertation Competition
The UGSG Dissertation Award Committee solicits submissions of dissertations for the 2005 UGSG Dissertation Award. The winner of the award will receive $250. The dissertation must have been completed during the 2005 calendar year. Dissertations submitted for awards with other AAG-affiliated organizations are not eligible. Send one copy to each of the two judges: Kathryne Mitchell, Department of Geography, the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195 – kmitch@u.washington.edu; and Norma Rantisi, Department of Geography, Concordia University — nrantisi@alcor.concordia.ca. Deadline: January 31st, 2006

Masters Thesis Competition
The UGSG Masters Thesis Awards Committee solicits submissions of theses for the 2005 UGSG Masters Thesis Award. The winner of the award will receive $150. The thesis must have been completed during the 2005 calendar. Theses submitted for awards with other AAG-affiliated organizations are not eligible. Send one copy to each of the two judges: Sarah Elwood, Department of Geography, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ — selwood@arizona.edu; and Eugene McCann, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. Canada— emccann@sfu.edu. Deadline: January 31st, 2006

Student Paper Competition
The Student Paper Competition Committee solicits submissions. This award goes to the best paper on any aspect of Urban Geography given by a student at any professional meeting in the 12 months preceding (and including) the Chicago AAG conference. Preference will be given to fully developed academic papers. The winner of the award will receive $50 and an invitation to submit the paper to Urban Geography. Send one copy to each of the judges, Jason Hackworth, Department of Geography, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada— jason.hackworth@utoronto.ca; and Dan Trudeau, Department of Geography, University of Colorado, Boulder— trudeau@colorado.edu. Deadline: February 15th, 2006

UGSG Glenda Laws Undergraduate Paper Award
Please encourage your students to consider submitting papers to the Glenda Laws Undergraduate Paper competition. This award goes to the best paper on an urban geographic topic written by an undergraduate student, regardless of membership in the AAG or participation in the 2005 meetings. The winner of the award will receive $50. Papers submitted for awards to other AAG-affiliated organizations are not eligible. Send one copy to each of the judges, David Wilson, Department of Geography, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL dwilson2@staff.uiuc.edu; and Mary Thomas— thomas.1672@osu.edu. Deadline: February 15th, 2006

Student Travel Support
The UGSG has a small amount of money available to support students presenting at urban topics at the Chicago AAG. Individual travel awards are $100, and are intended to support presentations on topics related to the urban focus of the specialty group. To apply, send a short letter stating your degree program, your institutional affiliation, and your goals and purposes in attending the conference. Also include copies of your abstract and conference registration. Send materials to Elvin Wyly, UGSG Treasurer, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia, 1984 West Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2 Canada. Email submissions may be sent to ewyly@geog.ubc.ca. The deadline for receipt of applications is January 31, 2006, and awards will be announced as soon as possible thereafter.
EMPLOYMENT

- Applications are invited for a tenure-track position in **Urban Geography at the Assistant Professor** level to begin in September 2006. PhD in Geography or Urban Studies required. The successful candidate will teach a range of courses in his/her areas of expertise in urban geography and urban studies that complement the existing strengths of the department. The successful candidate will also be expected to teach an introductory course in Human Geography and an upper-level field-based research seminar. A strong commitment to liberal arts education, civic engagement, and undergraduate research activities is essential. The successful candidate will play an important role in the College’s interdisciplinary concentration in Urban Studies, which is based in the geography department. If appropriate, successful candidates can play important roles in the interdisciplinary and other programs listed on the college web page.

Salary will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience. Please send CV, pertinent publications, course syllabi, three letters of recommendation and a letter of application discussing research and teaching interests to: David Lanegran, Chair, Department of Geography, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105. Applications received by **October 15, 2005** will receive first consideration.

Macalester College is a selective, private liberal arts college in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. The College enrolls 1,800 students from almost all 50 states and approximately 80 countries. The geography department consists of five tenure track faculty plus a full time GIS Laboratory Instructor. We have about 90 geography majors. Macalester is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer that prides itself on providing support for excellence in teaching and in faculty scholarship. We are especially interested in candidates committed to working with students of diverse backgrounds. Successful candidates will be expected to pursue rich research programs as well as to help sustain, as appropriate, the College's emphases on multiculturalism, internationalism, and service/civic engagement.

**Cornell University's Asian American Studies Program** invites applications for one tenure-track assistant professor position to begin fall 2006. The appointment will be housed jointly with either the Department of Development Sociology, or the Department of City and Regional Planning, or the Department of Asian Studies. The candidate must have substantive training and research interests in Asian American Studies. Research (QUANTITATIVE AND/OR QUALITATIVE) focusing on urban studies is especially welcome. Comparative and interdisciplinary interests will be an asset. The Ph.D. must be completed by September 2006. Deadline for application is **October 1, 2005**. Please send application, including a cover letter, curriculum vitae, and three letters of recommendation to: Chair, Search Committee, Asian American Studies Program, 420 Rockefeller Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-2502, Fax: (607) 254-4996. Cornell is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer, Educator.

**Attention Recent and Future Graduates:** Uncle Sam is now hiring! There are over 18,000 open positions in hundreds of locations around the U.S. Many of them relate to geography, urban planning, or GIS. A recent search of urban-geography-related phrases resulted in the following number of opportunities, found on [http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/](http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/): “geography” = 113 jobs; “GIS” = 96 jobs; “cartographer” = 44 jobs; “community planner” = 27 jobs. Also consider other positions that may relate to geography, such as economist, project manager, program analyst, social scientist, statistician, computer programmer, technician, analyst, examiner, auditor, etc. You can also narrow your search to a particular state/region/city, a specific agency, or to a grade/salary range.

CALL FOR PAPERS & SUBMISSIONS

**Urban Affairs Association**

The Urban Affairs Association is holding its 36th annual meeting in Montréal, Québec, Canada, April 19-22, 2006. The theme of the conference is “Neighborhoods and Urban Transformation: The New Global Context”. The deadline for proposals is **October 1, 2005**. For more information, visit [http://www.udel.edu/uua/2006CallComplete.pdf](http://www.udel.edu/uua/2006CallComplete.pdf)

**Remote Sensing and GIS for Urban Analysis:**

A Special Paper Session for the 2006 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers (AAG), 7-11 March 2006, Chicago, IL, USA

Urban environments are characterized by highly dynamic changes in biophysical and socio-economic domains, and management of urban environments involves procedures of mapping and monitoring which require reliable information base and robust analytical technologies. Remote sensing and GIS, given their cost-effectiveness and technological soundness, are increasingly being used for development of useful source of information and for decision making in support of a wide array of urban applications. This special paper session will serve as a forum for researchers to communicate their current development regarding the use of remote sensing and GIS for urban analyses. You are invited to submit abstracts for presentations in this
special paper session. Aspects considered will include (but not limited to): (1) Remotely sensed data requirements for urban landscape characterization; (2) Digital image processing procedures for deriving accurate and consistent information on urban attributes from remotely sensed data; (3) Analytical techniques and methodologies for deriving indicators of social and economic conditions that prevail within urban landscapes; (4) Urban landscape change monitoring and mapping case studies; (5) Impacts of urbanization upon ecological and social environment; (6) Urban landscape simulation and predictive modeling based on remotely sensed data; and (7) Interface between remote sensing/GIS and urban geography.

Abstract submission details are available in recent issues of the AAG newsletter and at the AAG website http://www.aag.org/annualmeetings/Chicago2006/abstract.cfm. Please note that the AAG is now using online submission of abstracts and registration materials (check AAG's webpage for details). Whenever possible, please go through the online submission, and then send us an email containing: (1) Your name, presentation title, and abstract; and (2) The “Participant Number” assigned to you by the online registration system. AAG Deadline for paper abstracts is 13 October 2005. Our deadline for receiving all application materials from presenters is 12 October 2005.

Please contact us with questions or for further details: Drs. Xiaojun Yang and Victor Mesev, Department of Geography, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306, USA; 850-644-8379 (phone); 850-644-5913 (fax); xyang@fsu.edu or vmeserv@fsu.edu (email).

AAG Political Geography Specialty Group Pre-Conference
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL, March 5–7, 2006

The Political Geography Specialty Group of the AAG will hold a conference immediately prior to the Annual Meetings of the AAG. As in the past papers on all aspects of political geography are welcome. We also intend to organize a small number of themed sessions on the “Political Geographies of the City”. The city has long been an important focus for work in political geography and we welcome expressions of interest for papers that address the range of current issues and concerns in this area.

The conference will be held in Urbana, Illinois with the Department of Geography at the University of Illinois serving as the local host. The conference will convene at 6pm on Sunday, March 5 with an opening reception. Paper and discussion sessions will be held on Monday (9am-5pm) and Tuesday morning at the Levis Center, University of Illinois. We will organize transportation to the AAG Conference arriving in time for the Opening Plenary on Tuesday, March 7.

There is no conference registration fee. The Specialty Group has negotiated a discount rate with the Hampton Inn of $79/night for a double room, which must be booked by the 18th of February. Rooms can be booked at this rate from Saturday night (March 4) to Monday night (March 6). The hotel contact number is 217-337-1100. The hotel is 6 blocks from the Levis Center.

We ask that potential participants indicate their interest in participating by November 15, 2005, and that abstracts for papers be submitted by February 1. First priority will be given to those who wish to present papers, and then to those who are willing to serve as session chairs or discussants. Other participants are welcome on a space available basis.

To indicate your interest in participating in the conference, please send an email to amwood@ou.edu by November 15. Provide your name and contact information, and indicate whether you wish to present a paper, serve as chair or discussant, or simply attend. If you are interested in presenting a paper please indicate its general topic or substance. If you have questions about the conference or require further information, please contact Andrew Wood, University of Oklahoma (amwood@ou.edu) or David Wilson, University of Illinois (dwilson2@express.cites.uiuc.edu).

Book Reviewers Needed: Journal of Urban Affairs
Yonn Dierwechter, Assistant Professor of Urban Studies at the University of Washington, Tacoma, has recently taken up the position of Co-Book Review Editor for the Journal of Urban Affairs. Yonn asks that anyone interested in reviewing recent or forthcoming titles email him at yonn@u.washington.edu. Please provide Yonn with full contact details and areas of expertise.

**People & Department News**

California State University, Long Beach- recent faculty scholarly activity. Submitted by: Chrys Rodrigue, Dept. Chair

**Publications:**


**GRANTS AND CONTRACTS:**

Dennis Fisher (Psychology) and Vincent Del Casino received a $341,000 grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to investigate "Interventions for Hard-to-Reach Club Drug Users" in the Long Beach area. The award was for three years and was granted in 2004.

Franklin Gossette and Suzanne P. Wechsler have received a series of contracts through the CSULB Geography Department MapLab, ranging from $12,000 to $40,000, from several Southern California municipalities to provide GPS services, GIS-based analysis, and land use analyses.

**RéMY TREMBLAY AWARDED A CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR ON KNOWLEDGE CITIES**

The Canada Research Chairs Program stands at the centre of a national strategy to make Canada one of the world's top five countries for research and development. Chairholders advance the frontiers of knowledge in their fields, not only through their own work, but also by teaching and supervising students and coordinating the work of other researchers.

**Quality of Life is Better in Knowledge Cities — Fact or Fiction?**

According to many rankings of cities in the knowledge-based economy published by scholarly journals and magazines, any city that wants to be part of the new economy must offer a “good” quality of life. In addition, studies suggest that knowledge cities offer a large number of amenities, that they are safe, and that their inhabitants are tolerant of marginalized groups. But what does “quality of life” mean in the context of the new economy? Is it a useful concept? Are high-tech companies concerned about what kind of urban setting their employees want to live and grow in? Are talented people attracted to the so-called “urban” quality of life? Are cities in the new, knowledge-based economy — often called “cool” cities because of their fast-paced lifestyle — necessarily the ones with the highest quality of life?

The goal of the Canada Research Chair on Knowledge Cities is to shed light on these questions. The answers provided by Dr. Tremblay’s team may reverse our perspective on the many rankings of cities, radically change the nature of public debate on those rankings, and prompt a re-evaluation of theories suggesting that only “cool” cities have any chance of joining the select group of knowledge cities. Rémy Tremblay, Ph.D. Université du Québec remy_tremblay@teluq.uquebec.ca.