



# NEWSLETTER

## OCTOBER 2007

### Big Plans for the IPSG at the Boston AAG!

*Laura and Jay, IPSG Co-chairs*

The IPSG is gearing up for the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers to be held in Boston, MA from April 15-19, 2008.

We are extremely excited to announce and promote a joint meeting of the IPSG, the International Geographical Union's Indigenous Peoples' Knowledges and Rights Commission, and the Canadian Association of Geographers Native Canadians Study Group. Entitled "Indigenous Geographies of Struggle and Self-Determination," the joint meeting of these groups will begin with a less formal meeting in Plymouth, MA, USA for two days prior to the beginning of the annual meeting of the AAG in Boston.

The pre-conference meeting in Plymouth will bring together geographers from around the world who work with Indigenous peoples, to aid in creating a network and to share our research and experiences. This meeting will also allow for informal gatherings and exploration of the local area and history. While in Plymouth we will be meeting with the local Native American community, the Mashpee Wampanoag.

During the first two days of the AAG meeting in Boston, the IPSG is planning an Indigenous-focused symposium which will contain a series of paper sessions, panels, and our plenary speaker, Dr. Dan Wildcat from Haskell Indian Nations University.

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Other Indigenous-focused sessions will follow on the remaining days of the AAG conference.

This symposium is conceived as a way to bring Indigenous geographies to the forefront in the discipline as a whole and will showcase our research and methodological work. Therefore, we are hoping that our members will step forward with additional ideas for paper sessions or panels, and send out 'calls for papers' to the list-serve. The AAG deadline for organizing sessions currently stands as 31 October ([www.aag.org](http://www.aag.org)).

If you are interested in presenting a paper in an IPSG session or organizing a session, please submit your abstract to IPSG secretary, Doug Herman ([hermand@si.edu](mailto:hermand@si.edu)) ASAP. Current CFPs can be found on the IPSG website at: [www.pacificworlds.com/ipsg/index.html](http://www.pacificworlds.com/ipsg/index.html).

*Send your abstracts in ASAP  
to be placed in an IPSG  
session!!*

## 2007 IPSG Student Paper Competition

The winner of the 2007 Indigenous Peoples Specialty Group Graduate Student Paper Competition is Keith W. Lindner of Colorado State University. The award (\$150, and a one-year membership in the IPSG) was given to Lindner for his paper “Biopolitical Ecuador: Race and Nature in the Formation of Nation.”

**Abstract:** A growing body of literature explores the ways in which nation and national identity are constructed and produced, and the inclusions, exclusions, and violences these processes inevitably entail. While categories such as race, ethnicity and gender have been central to such analyses, nature - surprisingly - has remained relatively unmarked. This paper argues, to the contrary, that nature is fundamental to productions of nation. Drawing primarily from Michel Foucault's notion of biopolitics and Giorgio Agamben's notion of the biopolitical fracture, the paper explores the ways in which geographies of nature are deeply implicated in the production of nation in Ecuador, and argues that nature is both constitutive of, and constituted through, these contested processes. The paper maps techniques of state biopolitics, aimed at bringing the biological under state control, in contemporary Ecuador. The case illustrates the ways in which the state, in its projects of nation building, has sought to transform and control nature just as much as populations and national identities. In struggle over the nation, the state and Ecuador's indigenous populations mobilize competing geographies of nature and modes of political qualification in complex and mutually constitutive ways. For each, nature is a fundamental element in nationality and political existence, though for different reasons and in different ways. In turn, nature is produced in and through these contested processes in ways that render it inextricable from struggles over biopolitical order and productions of nation.



*Congratulations, Keith!*

## San Francisco IPSG Business Meeting

*Minutes by Doug Herman*

Twenty-two members of the IPSG attended the business meeting at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the AAG in San Francisco.

It was noted that the IPSG had a good number of sessions and presentations this year. A glance at the presentations by topic puts the IPSG not in the top bracket (with GIS, Urban, etc) but in the next big grouping with Transportation, Population, Gender, Hazards, and others. Not all of these presentations are in IPSG-sponsored sessions, however, so it is important that we continue to try to draw in people doing work in this field.

### Conferences:

Renee Louis announced the upcoming Indigenous Mapping Network Gathering, Coeur d' Alene Casino (Worley, ID), August 20-22, 2007. The Indigenous Mapping Network, an affiliate of the Seventh Generation Fund, is an organization set up to empower native communities by sharing essential tools which protect, preserve, and enhance the way of life within indigenous territories. The Network is open to help and suggestions, as they are looking to revitalize the indigenous mapping initiative. They are also looking for open-source products. It is hoped that this will lead to a new path in indigenous community mapping. Visit their website for more information:  
<http://www.indigenoumapping.net/conference.html>.

Jay Johnson gave an update on the Indigenous Peoples' Knowledges and Rights Commission of the International Geographical Union. The Commission's mission is "to create a network within geography which allows Indigenous and non-Indigenous geographers working with and for Indigenous communities to share their research and experiences with each other and the discipline as a whole." The next meeting of the Commission is planned for October 29 - November 3, 2007 in Taiwan. The first three days will be dedicated to paper presentations, meetings and social activities. The last three days will be a journey around Taiwan visiting various Aboriginal communities and other sites. Some parts of the conference will be held in conjunction with the IGU-Islands Commission. More information is available at their website:  
<http://www.unl.edu/geography/IPKRC/>.

### Motions:

It was suggested that for next year's AAG Annual Meeting, the IPSG hold a workshop on teaching indigenous peoples, and on indigenous methodologies, so as to mentor other teachers. Towards this end, it was also suggested that we

create space on the IPSG website for the posting of syllabi on indigenous geography. This will be done by the Secretary, Doug Herman.

Regarding the website, it was also requested that conference paper abstracts be included online. This is a time-consuming process that was not done last year, but had been done in the past. The Secretary agreed to undertake this. He also agreed to put out a newsletter, which (it was argued) does more for building a sense of community than the sporadic emails sent out on the listserv.

In regard to the AAG placing chairs of the Regional Specialty Groups on an international advisory board, the IPSG voted that there should be an IPSG member on that board also, to safeguard the interests of Indigenous peoples.

Similarly, the IPSG voted to send a letter to the AAG supporting lower fees for adjuncts and non-fulltime, non-tenure-track faculty participating in the AAG.

It was also suggested that the IPSG make a statement regarding the long-term use of (especially) third-world scholars as adjuncts with no chance of full-term appointments.

Finally, there was a motion that the IPSG send a letter to the AAG regarding the report of the Diversity Task Force and the representation of Indigenous scholars within the discipline.

All motions passed.

### Specialty Group Chairs Meeting

The AAG has “gift memberships” available for citizens and residents in eligible countries. The gift membership costs US\$20 and entitles the individual to all the privileges of membership except hard copies of the journals. Eligible countries are defined by World Bank classification for (low? middle? income countries).

The AAG announced that chairs of the Regional specialty groups will be ex-officio members of a committee on international issues.

This year’s AAG meeting had 6,500 participants and 65 concurrent sessions. Next year’s meeting will have less space, allowing only 50 concurrent sessions. There is some push for Specialty Groups to limit the number of sessions they organize. The IPSG considered holding a pre-conference next year to allow all our presenters to participate. However, AAG Executive Director Doug Richardson has encouraged the IPSG not to do so, saying that our work is too important and needs to be incorporated into the bigger conference.

Incoming AAG president Baerwald encouraged Specialty Group chairs to foster greater interdisciplinary ties.

Membership services has introduced an online system for specialty groups to communicate with their members, as well as listserves and accounting. Because of glitches in their system, the IPSG has chosen to continue our current listserv.

There was a broad and at times impassioned discussion about having a sliding scale of membership and conference registration fees for adjunct and non-fulltime faculty. The AAG has opposed this measure, but a number of specialty groups (including the IPSG) spoke in favor of it.

Another discussion concerned child care and family programs at the annual meetings. The AAG has found that it is not cost-effective to provide on-site child care, because it tends not to be utilized as parents seek out specific facilities that best suit their needs. Currently, the AAG offers up to \$300 in support for participants needing child-care facilities.

The point was made that specialty groups need to have up-to-date annual reports filed with the AAG.

At the annual meetings, AAG Geograms are distributed every day. These offer the day's highlighted sessions. The IPSG can choose which session we might wish to have listed on these programs each day of the conference.

We hope to continue regular publication of an IPSG newsletter - please send in your news!!

Send news of conferences, grant announcements, publications, updates on research activities, Indigenous events, and all other relevant items to:

Dr. Doug Herman, IPSG Newsletter Editor  
Senior Geographer  
National Museum of the American Indian  
Smithsonian Institution  
4th St. and Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20560  
[hermand@si.edu](mailto:hermand@si.edu)

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*Visit the IPSG website at:*

<http://www.pacificworlds.com/ipsg/index.html>

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