

Mountain Geography Specialty Group year 2000 chair's message

The Mountain Geography Specialty Group (MGSG) inaugural year has been busy! I have been and am involved in several mountain related projects, some are now completed and some are ongoing. Below I briefly discuss our activities and ask for your support.

Founding of the group kept me busy for the year preceding our first meeting in Hawaii and during the year since. Nearly 100 individuals joined in Hawaii and e-mail responses from around the globe put us well over 100. Indeed, the listserv has over 100 subscribers, all of whom asked to be members of the specialty group. Indeed, all are welcome, however, the AAG shows only 42 regular dues paying members, with an additional 42 students. Please, if you are an AAG member, be sure to join the MGSG by checking the box on your renewal; your official membership brings us more funding from the AAG and assures our continued status as a recognized specialty group.

As part of founding the group we began a listserv in partnership with The Mountain Institute. I wish to publicly thank Baker Perry for serving as administrator, and Jason Espie and Elizabeth Byers at TMI for making this possible. I hope all of you subscribe to both mf-geography, our listserv, and to mf-mtnforum because much of interest to us is distributed on the mtnforum. And, thanks to TMI and The Mountain Forum for hosting us!

Alton Byers at TMI, in partnership with the AAG and the MGSG, submitted a proposal to NSF to form a consortium of scholars to write an advanced undergraduate textbook on Mountain Geography. The proposal was not funded, but the reviews were encouraging, we are considering revision and re-submission. If you are interested in this project, please contact Alton directly (abyers@mountain.org) as it is still something very worthwhile.

2002 – The International Year of the Mountains is just around the corner! I encourage you all to participate fully. I have contacted the National Geographic Society and suggested the theme for Geography Awareness Week in November 2001 be Mountains, and that the January 2002 issue of the magazine be devoted to, or at least have an article on, Mountains. So far the NGS has been cordial but non-committal. I have had informal discussions with a few of our members about other 2002 activities: special journal issues; special sessions at various conferences; collaborative writing projects; and Mountain field trips and many sessions at the 2002 AAG meeting in Los Angeles, California. All of these seem promising. What ideas do you have? I'd like to hear from you.

I'm going to the International Geographical Congress in Seoul this coming August where I will attend the pre-Congress Mountain Workshop as well as the main Congress. Part of the workshop is devoted to 2002 activities. The time is ripe for the MGSG to participate in a meaningful way in this international arena. Please, let me know what you would like to see happen in 2002 and hopefully we can make it happen!!

Without too much effort, we managed six paper sessions at the AAG this year, and there are many papers and posters with the word "mountain" in the title throughout the meeting. This is great! Let's work to include all those doing mountain work in the MGSG.

Our membership is predominantly physical geographers. Encourage your human and cultural colleagues to join us! I will make an effort to attend some of the "human" business meetings in Pittsburgh to drum up support by making a short announcement. If you would do so as well, that would help!

This first year has been exciting and challenging. With your support we can meet those challenges. I wish you all the best and hope you are able to spend some quality time in the mountains very soon.

Donald Friend

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