



American Association of Geographers
Middle States Division
NEWSLETTER

Editor: Joan Welch

Mark Your Calendar!

Fall 2016 Meeting
JOINT MEETING WITH PGS
HOST PENN STATE ALTOONA

November 4-5, 2016

President's Message

It was great to see you all at the fall 2015 meeting in Binghamton, NY hosted by Mark Blumler and the Geography Department at Binghamton University. This year's Middle States Division meeting will be held jointly with the Pennsylvania Geographical Society (PGS) on November 4-5, 2016 at the Blair County Convention Center in Altoona, PA. The conference is co-hosted by Pennsylvania State University's Altoona Campus Department of Earth and Mineral Sciences, and West Chester University's Department of Geography and Planning. Penn State Altoona (<http://www.altoona.psu.edu/ems/>) supports the academic development of students pursuing degrees in geography, and geoscience, amongst others. West Chester University of Pennsylvania is a comprehensive regional institution that offers undergraduate and graduate geography programs with 75 undergraduate majors, and close to 45 graduate students (https://www.wcupa.edu/academics/sch_sba.geo/).

The Blair County Convention Center sits in the beautiful hills of central Pennsylvania. One regional attraction is the Railroader Museum and the Horseshoe Curve, an iconic cultural landmark of the Allegheny Plateau. More information about the Fall 2016 conference will be forthcoming in the Summer newsletter.

Joan Welch, West Chester University

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Additional division information may be found on our website: <http://www.msaag.org/>

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Fall 2015 MSD Meeting Report – Binghamton, NY

There were 103 attendees (41 Faculty and 61 Students) at the fall, 2015 MSDAAG conference held at the downtown Binghamton Holiday Inn, organized by Mark Blumler and Jo Mano, and hosted by SUNY Binghamton. There were 46 papers presented in 12 sessions, 18 posters in the poster session and 1 panel. In the Student Paper competition, both Matthew Clum (Ithaca College) and Paula Jones (Buffalo State) were awarded \$100 for first prize for their impressive undergraduate research papers. For graduate students, Michelle Ritchie (Binghamton University) was awarded \$100 for first place, and Carlos Morales-Ramirez (West Chester University) \$50 for second place. The Poster competition was a close contest with excellent student posters. For the undergraduate students, Ryan Higgins (SUNY Geneseo) took first prize, and second prize went to Keith House and Nathan Mroz (Buffalo State). The two graduate poster award winners were Tammie Harris (Binghamton) and Maegan Ferry (Shippensburg).

Geography Bowl Competition at Binghamton

There were six teams of students that competed in the Geography Bowl at the Middle States Division meeting in Binghamton. Top contenders were the teams from SUNY Geneseo and Pennsylvania State University. The top six scorers were: Jase Bernhardt/Penn State, Corry Shaffer/Shippensburg, Luiz Ortiz-Sanchez/Binghamton, Adam Dohrenwend/SUNY Geneseo, Mollie Yanchuck/Shippensburg, and Beth Wrisley/SUNY Geneseo. The three runners-up are Emily Viola/Binghamton, Razy Kased/SUNY Buffalo, and Carrie Lang/SUNY Geneseo. Geography Bowl teams are made up of a maximum of six students of which one must be a graduate student, one an undergraduate student, one a woman, and one a man. We have a team going to the Geography Bowl competition in San Francisco for the 2016 Annual Meeting, and those who participate will receive \$300. Join us on Friday night 4/1 at 7pm for the fun!

Welcome Puerto Rican Geographers

Geographers of Puerto Rico opted to join the Middle States Division of the AAG. We were honored at the 2015 Fall meeting in Binghamton to have members of the MSD from Puerto Rico join us. There were two interesting and stimulating research presentations given by geographers from the University of Puerto Rico campuses.

Middle States Geographer

The Middle States Geographer is the official academic journal of the Middle States Division of the Association of American Geographers. The journal is published annually and includes papers from external submissions and the division Annual Meeting. The Middle States Geographer contains papers authored by both faculty and students (with peer-review by at least two reviewers) and covers a wide range of topics.

We invite all who present papers at the upcoming Fall 2016 MSDAAG meeting to submit a manuscript for publication in the next issue of the Middle States Geographer, although manuscripts from all researchers are welcome. Paper submission guidelines are available on the journal's website at: www.msaag.org. You may also contact the editors: Adam Kalkstein at the USMA West Point, Adam.Kalkstein@usma.edu or Paul Marr at Shippensburg University, pgmarr@ship.edu if you have questions about submitting a manuscript or if you are interested in serving as a reviewer. Students presenting papers (faculty co-authors may be included after the student award competition has occurred) should consider submitting their paper for publication in the journal.

The Middle States Geographer is entirely an online journal. Articles from 1968 (Volume 8) through 2014 (Volume 47) may be viewed at the journal website. The 2015 issue (Volume 48) will be available soon. The online format of the journal widely increases accessibility to readers and exposure for authors, while reducing printing costs. Furthermore, color graphics are now possible at no cost to authors.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT: Fall 2016, Altoona, Pennsylvania

The 2016 Middle States Division AAG Meeting will be held at the Blair County Convention Center on Friday, November 4 and Saturday November 5.



Penn State Altoona and West Chester University welcome all to the Blair County Convention Center in Altoona, PA. The 2016 meeting will consist of two days of paper and poster sessions. Friday will include plenary and paper sessions, buffet lunch, and a dinner. On Saturday, a morning of sessions will be followed by a buffet luncheon with a brief MSD meeting and student awards. Members will vote on proposed bylaws revisions available for preview at <http://msaag.org/about-us/constitution-bylaws/>. Please join us.

Want to plan your stay early? The PGS has arranged for a block of rooms at the **Courtyard by Marriott** for Thursday 11/3 and Friday nights 11/4 at the reduced rates of \$139 and \$169 respectively plus tax. Please mention "Pennsylvania Geographical Society and Middle States Division of the AAG" when making your reservations. Please also reserve your room early; rooms at the meeting rate are only available until October 3, 2016 and space is limited.

Information on other lodging options are available here: <http://blairconventioncenter.com/community/lodging/>

Please note that there is a Penn State football game on Saturday, 11/5/16, and so make reservations early.

The Courtyard by Marriott at the Blair County Convention Center

2 Convention Center Drive, Altoona, Pennsylvania 16602 USA (814)312-1800

<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/aococ-courtyard-altoona/>

Rate: \$139 for Thurs night and \$169 for Friday night plus tax (Penn State Football game weekend)

Stay Tuned for the Registration form and other information about the conference, in the Summer 2016 Middle States Division newsletter, due out in July.

Call for Nominations for MSD Officers

Please consider joining the leadership of MSDAAG. We are currently soliciting nominations for Secretary for 2017. Voting will take place in October 2016. The newly elected position will be announced at the Fall 2016 Meeting.

The term runs from January 2017 – December 2017. The Secretary is in charge of keeping the meeting minutes from board meetings and judging the student paper competition. The board has two meetings a year, one a conference call in the spring and one at the annual fall meeting.

Normally, the President serves first one year as Secretary, then as Vice-President, and in the third year the position of President. The Vice President is responsible for the Geography Bowl. The President hosts the annual meeting, chairs board meetings, and puts out the newsletter. The Executive Board has proposed changes to the Bylaws that will revise these positions and duties that will take effect in 2017 if adopted. Please see <http://www.msaag.org/> for details.

THE EXECUTIVE BOARD WILL PROVIDE ALL THE GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES YOU NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL. PLEASE CONSIDER THESE REWARDING OPPORTUNITIES. YOU MAY CONTACT JOAN WELCH (jwelch@wcupa.edu) OR ANY CURRENT BOARD MEMBER FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

Please submit nominations to Joan Welch (jwelch@wcupa.edu) by September 1.

Call for Program Nominations

The AAG is instituting a new "Award for Program Excellence," honoring non-Ph. D. granting geography departments and Geography Programs within blended departments. They will honor four-year and Master's programs in alternate years. In 2017 they will honor a Master's program and in 2018 an undergraduate program. Each Regional division is to nominate up to two programs for the 2017 award. For a complete description of the award, eligibility, and nomination guidelines, please see <http://www.aag.org/programexcellence> and Rob Mason's email of 2/21/16.

So, we need to hear from you! Please nominate any non-Ph. D. granting program from the Middle States region offering a Master's degree that you feel is deserving of the award. Send your nomination(s) for an outstanding Master's degree geography program to Rob Mason, Regional Councilor, at mason@temple.edu, by May 1.

Call for Graduate and Undergraduate Student Papers

Submit a paper to the AAG Middle States Division's

STUDENT PAPER & POSTER COMPETITION

2016 Annual Meeting

Middle States Division of the Association of American Geographers
Blair County Convention Center, Altoona PA

November 4-5, 2016

Middle States Division AAG encourages all graduate and undergraduate students to submit and present research papers to the Student Paper Competition of the MSDAAG annual conference. Both graduate and undergraduate competitions have a First Prize of \$100 and a Second Prize of \$50.

Student status is as of May 1, 2016. PLEASE NOTE YOUR STATUS (GRAD/UNDERGRAD) on your abstract and paper submission. Registration fees are refunded after the conference for students both submitting the completed paper by the deadline AND presenting the paper at the conference. Completed papers must follow the *Middle States Geographer* guidelines and can be no longer than 8 pages, single spaced, 10 point Times Roman or equivalent font. Further details on the guidelines are specified at the web site at www.msaag.org. Entrants should send abstracts of no more than 250 words to Joan Welch at jwelch@wcupa.edu by October 14, and send electronic copies of completed papers to Pankaj Lal at lalp@mail.montclair.edu, MSDAAG Student Paper Competition Chair, by October 17.

There is also a Student Poster Competition with graduate and undergraduate divisions with a First Prize of \$100 and a Second Prize of \$50. Send an abstract of your poster to Joan Welch by October 14, jwelch@wcupa.edu.

PLEASE NOTE YOUR STATUS (GRAD/UNDERGRAD) on your abstract. Registration fees are not refunded for all the poster competition entrants, only the poster competition winners.