

Transportation Geography Specialty Group Report

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Abstract:

This is an important year for the Transportation Geography Specialty Group (TGSG) of the Association of American Geographers (AAG). While I am very excited to report that we had a record number of TGSG-sponsored sessions at the 2012 AAG Annual Meeting in New York City, NY and the number of applicants and submissions for TGSG awards of 2012 has increased, our membership has slightly declined from 339 in 2011 to 273 as of November 2012. Though we are optimistic that these numbers will go up, we encourage you and your colleagues and students to join the TGSG when they renew their AAG memberships.

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Article:

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Among many TGSG activities, each year at the Annual Meeting of AAG the TGSG proudly honors a few outstanding individuals who have made significant contributions to transportation scholarship as well as those who are beginning their careers in Transportation Geography. At the 2012 AAG meeting in New York City the TGSG awarded two outstanding PhD dissertation awards and one Masters' thesis award. Another Masters' thesis was awarded an honorable mention. The outstanding PhD dissertation awards went to Danielle Fontaine of Clark University for "The landscape of potential harm: understanding parents' perceptions of the built environment and what this means for their decisions about their child's mode of travel to school in the City of Worcester, MA," supervised by Susan Hanson and Deb Martin, and Rakim Mitra of the University of Toronto for "School travel mode choice behavior in Toronto, Canada," supervised by Ron Buliung. The Master's thesis award went to Monir Moniruzzaman of

McMaster University for “Accessibility and built environment effects on transit use,” supervised by Antonio Paez. David Eckely’s thesis, “A comprehensive process for spatiotemporal analysis of network-based phenomena,” supervised by Kevin Curtin at George Mason University, was selected for an honorable mention.

The most prestigious award offered by the TGSG each year is the Edward L. Ullman Award. This award recognizes a transport geographer’s lifelong commitment and contributions to the field. This year’s Edward L. Ullman award went to Dr. Jean-Claude Thill, the Knight Distinguished Professor of Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for his contributions to GIS-T, destination choice models, and spatial analysis. Throughout his career, Dr. Thill has been an avid advocate for taking transport geography seriously in decision making and helped broaden its presence in other fields. By custom, Dr. Thill is invited to give the Fleming Lecture in Transportation Geography at the Annual Meeting of AAG 2013 in Los Angeles. Dr. Thill is expert in the area of transportation and mobility systems. We look forward to hearing his insights on the modalities of spatial operations of transportation and communication networks and of their articulation with their surrounding regions, in technologies and policies that frame these modalities, and in the socio-economic implications on the regional context.

The 2012 Fleming Lecture was delivered by David Greene of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, winner of the 2011 Ullman Award. Dr. Greene is a leading authority on transportation and energy use. He has had a long and distinguished career in transportation studies and his work has influenced the thinking of academics, policy leaders at the highest level, and the general public. After an introduction from the TGSG chair, Julie Cidel, Dr. Greene gave his perspective on the challenges facing transportation policymakers and practitioners regarding global climate change. Mark Horner at Florida State University served as discussant.

There were 40 TGSG-sponsored sessions at the 2012 AAG Annual Meeting in New York City, which was a record. A person who deserves praise for bringing together these record number of sessions to the New York City meeting was Julie Cidel, the exiting chair of the TGSG. She took the opportunity to organize sessions from the abstracts that were not yet placed in a session using the AAG database. Many of these sessions were co-sponsored with a variety of other Specialty Groups, including Asian, Human Dimensions of Global Change, Geographic Information Science and Systems, Qualitative, Tourism & Recreation, and Urban Geography Specialty Groups. Topics covered in those sessions included air transportation networks, accessibility and social inclusion, aging, climate change, high-speed rail, mass transit, electric car, non-automotive transportation, transportation equity, time-geography, transport and health, travel behavior, pricing, policies, and utopian/dystopian mobilities. One of the highlighted sessions covered a wide array of papers to honor and celebrate James O. Wheeler’s contribution to urban, economic, and transportation geography. The non-automotive transportation session included many stimulating papers that highlighted college students’ current mode choices and policies for promoting non-automotive options in college campuses. A lively panel discussion on high-speed rail (HSR) in America particularly drew attention from audiences. The panel features an international group of transportation scholars in a discussion of the rapid growth of HSR around the world, the impediments to HSR in the United States, and the implications of HSR on the future of mobility. A Special Section in Volume 22 (May 2012) of the *Journal of Transport*

Geography, edited by Andrew Goetz, published panelists' viewpoints on HSR. The session was organized by Michael Minn.

The TGSG is looking forward to having many more exciting sessions with a variety of topics at the upcoming 2013 AAG Annual Meeting in Los Angeles on April 9–13. The sessions that are proposed include: childhoods and transport; electric and alternative fuel transport; critical network infrastructure; transportation and travel related to the parks, suburban sprawl and inner city development; mobility and transport; high speed rail; ICTs and green economy; time geography; transport and sustainability; port cityscapes; and network and spatio-temporal thinking. In addition, the Los Angeles transit field trip has been organized by Andy Goetz.

I look forward to seeing you all there!