

## **Fall 2006 Newsletter**

### **From the President**

Geography has never been more essential in America. Certainly, Geographic Information Sciences comes to mind first when recognizing the importance of our discipline to public advancement. But with its application in so many aspects of society and culture, geography is contributing in a comprehensive assortment of important areas. Just a few fields in which we are involved include climate change, conservation of natural resources, environmental degradation, natural hazards, international studies, social and economic justice, urban and rural studies, immigration, and cultural dispersion. Indeed, the list seems unending. Yet, it is apparent to all of us in geography that the American decision making public knows very little about space on earth and the discipline that studies that space. Here in Florida, the Florida Society of Geographers (FSG) and the Florida Geographic Alliance (FGA) have been at the forefront of advancing geography in the academe, K-12 education, and the public. The sterling research presented at the 2006 annual FSG conference held in St. Petersburg highlights the contribution that geographers are making to scholarship and spatial knowledge in our state. Additionally, the timely words of the keynote speaker, Dr. Harm deBlij, expressed our need to improve geographic understanding and education in the public.

This year I am pleased to announce that we will again have another great leader in geography at the FSG's annual conference. Dr. Stephen Leatherman, the director of the International Hurricane Research Center and the Laboratory for Coastal Research at Florida International University, has agreed to be our keynote speaker in Jacksonville. Dr. Leatherman is one of geography's great ambassadors. He is a rare scholar who has established a rigorous portfolio of scientific research, and yet he has also been able to get geography's and the geosciences' message to the public. As the director of International Hurricane Research Center Dr. Leatherman is conducting cutting edge research, and in this position he has become a spokesman for the discipline in such important public mediae as the New York Times and the Miami Herald. Additionally, as "Dr. Beach," he is a recognized figure on commercial and public television. By annually identifying America's top ten beaches he actively involves a large component of America on a geographic topic of interest to many. Few platforms are better for informing that element of America that the academe has such difficulty reaching, the television viewing public. Please, join me at the FSG annual meeting in Jacksonville. I look forward to seeing you there.

### **Highlights from the Feb. 17-19, 2006 FSG Annual Meeting**

FSG membership and participation at the annual meeting has steadily been increasing over the years. The 2006 FSG annual meeting was a huge success with 102 attendees and the meeting was held at the Hilton in downtown St. Petersburg, FL. There were 6 poster presentation and 38 paper presentations, which consisted of 3 Professional Geographers, 18 Faculty, 14 Graduate Students, and 3 undergraduate students. A GISCI GISP Certification Information Session was held by Stuart Hamilton, a GISP and GIS

Coordinator at the University of West Florida. The Florida Geographic Alliance conducted their business meeting on Sunday February 19<sup>th</sup>. There were 8 sessions and below are some of the research categories presented. For more information, download the FSG Program and Abstracts from the Annual Meeting page.

Session 1: Applied Geography

Session 2: Physical Geography

Session 3: Africa: Physical & Environmental

Session 4: GISP Certification Info Session

Session 5: Education and Demographics

Session 6: Recreation and Tourism

Session 7: Economic and Political Geography

Session 8: Global Issues 1

Session 8: Global Issues 2

### Keynote Speaker

FSG was honored to have Dr. Harm de Blij as the Keynote Speaker at the 2006 FSG annual meeting. Author, professor and television personality Harm de Blij (pronounced duh Blay) for seven years was popular Geography Editor on ABC's "Good Morning America". In 1996 he joined NBC News as Geography Analyst, appearing mostly on MSNBC. He was writer of and commentator for the original PBS Series "The Power of Place." Dr. de Blij has published more than 30 books including scientific, educational, and trade titles, and over 100 articles. His most recent trade book, *Why Geography Matters* (Oxford University Press, 2005) argues that America's persistent geographic illiteracy constitutes a national security risk. His textbook *Geography: Realms, Regions and Concepts* (Wiley) has exceeded 1 million copies in 12 editions since 1970. Another book, *Wine: a Geographic Appreciation* (Rowman & Allanheld) was a bestseller during the 1980s and was awarded a medal by the French wine organization, OIV, in Paris. Please join us in welcoming him to St. Petersburg.

### Student Honors Competition Winners

#### ***Undergraduate Paper Competition***

First Place: Cerian Gibbs, Department of Geography, University of Florida

Second Place: Richie Kent, Department of Geography, Florida State University

#### ***Undergraduate Paper Competition***

Collaborative Presentation

Joshua Berger, Department of Geography, University of Florida

Jordan Wright, Department of Geography, University of Florida

#### ***Poster Competition***

Collaborative Poster

Phillip Morris, Department of Geography, University of Florida

Ashish Patel, Department of Geography, University of Florida

Matthew Graham, Department of Geography, University of Florida

### Awards

A few of the FSG founders and long-time members we honored this year for their years of service and dedication to this organization during the Luncheon Saturday February 18<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m.

Founders and Life Time Achievement Award:

**Dr. Edward Fernald**, Department of Geography, Florida State University

**Dr. Ronald Schultz**, Department of Geosciences, Florida Atlantic University

**Dr. Morton Winsberg**, Department of Geography, Florida State University

**Mr. Ney C. Landrum**, Division of Recreation and Parks, Florida DEP Tallahassee

Long Time Members Award:

**Dr. Nancy J. Bahn**, Retired - Dade County Planning

**Dr. Bruce Bradford**, Department of Geography and Environmental Science, Stetson University

**Dr. Thomas D. Boswell**, Department of Geography and Regional Studies, University of Miami

**Mr. Warren MacKay**, Retired - General Electric

**Dr. Ira Sheskin**, Department of Geography and Regional Studies, University of Miami

**Dr. David Lee**, Department of Geosciences, Florida Atlantic University

#### Field Trip

The FSG field trip was Saturday February 18<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. and our tour guide was Dr. Ray Arsenault. The field trip was free and open to all meeting attendees. The field trip was a guided walking tour of historic downtown St. Petersburg.

“**Raymond Arsenault** is the John Hope Franklin Professor of History and co-director of the Florida Studies Program at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg, where he has taught since 1980. A specialist in the social, political, and environmental history of the American South, he is the author of two prize-winning books and numerous articles on race, civil rights, and regional culture. His most recent books are *The Changing South of Gene Patterson: Journalism and Civil Rights, 1960-68*, co-edited with Roy Peter Clark, and *Paradise Lost? The Environmental History of Florida*, co-edited with Jack E. Davis. His forthcoming book, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*, will be published by Oxford University Press in January 2006. Ray is also the author of the prize-winning history *St. Petersburg and the Florida Dream, 1888-1950*.”

(<http://www.festivalofreading.com/authorbios.html#arsenault>)

Dr. Raymond Arsenault  
rarsenau@stpt.usf.edu  
University of South Florida  
Florida Studies Program  
USF St. Petersburg SNL 200  
140 Seventh Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

FSG Local Arrangements

**? University of South Florida's Tampa Department of Geography**

The 2005 FSG Executive Board wishes to extend a special thank you for hosting the FSG website, which made the coordination of this year's meeting a success and for supporting the student volunteers.

**? University of South Florida's St. Petersburg Environmental Science, Policy and Geography Department and the Florida Studies Department**

FSG would also like to thank these Departments for their time and for supporting the student volunteers.

**FSG Staging Committee (USF Student Volunteers)**

**Erik Ahrens**, Undergraduate Student, University of South Florida

**David Branch**, Undergraduate Student, University of South Florida

**Julie Earls**, Graduate Student, University of South Florida

**Rob Stetson Jr.**, Undergraduate Student, University of South Florida

**Geoffrey McCall**, Undergraduate Student, University of South Florida

**Jeffrey Wilson**, Undergraduate Student, University of South Florida

**Joshua D. Rumschlag**, Undergraduate Student, University of South Florida