

Cultural and Political Ecology Newsletter
(CPEN #43 -- Spring 2004)
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Announcements

The CPESG Listserv (AAG-CESG-L) is for general exchange of information, news, views, debate, questions and answers by the members of the specialty group. All current CPESG members have been subscribed to the list. Go to <http://lists.psu.edu/archives/aag-cesg-l.html>, select the link to join the list, and follow the instructions. Thereafter, you can manage your subscription and access the archives through the same interface. For all queries, email James McCarthy jpm23@psu.edu. Only list members (CPESG members) can post messages. To do so, send your message to the list address: AAG-CESG-L@LISTS.PSU.EDU. Everyone on the list will receive your message so please ensure that the subject line is informative, and the content is appropriate. Contributions sent to this list are automatically archived for posterity.

Signing off from the editor

After five years at the helm, I have decided to step down from the helm of the *CAPE Newsletter*. The proximate reason is that I am moving to the University of Melbourne in Australia, and distance from North America will make keeping in touch with the pulse of the Group, and attendance at the annual meetings, more difficult.

I always enjoyed receiving the *Newsletter* when I was a graduate student at Clark. I started editing it while teaching geography at Brunel University in Britain (a fine Department, now faced with closure as the result of the university restructuring typical of British universities), before moving to the London School of Economics and teaching some dauntingly talented graduate students on the Masters in Environment and Development for a couple of years. Distance from America seemed

to make little difference since the LSE was a hub for all sorts of networks - Group members that showed up in London included Harold Brookfield (who actually did his PhD at LSE, well before I was born!), Susanne Freidberg, David Carr, Piers Blaikie, Bill Adams, Tony Bebbington, Larry Grossman, Nayna Jhaveri, Doug Johnson, Ben Wisner and Paul Robbins. Many of my LSE students are now embedded in international NGOs and the UN system, practicing their craft. I moved to a more permanent job at the University of Arizona in 2001 - political ecology at the LSE lives on since Tim Forsyth continues to teach the Masters and Ben Wisner is a visiting fellow. At the University of Arizona I discovered a fascinating range of new research topics, and a node of political ecology - the work of Tom Sheridan in anthropology, Diana Liverman in geography, human ecologist Steve Lansing, and colleagues Jim Greenberg and Tad Park, with whom I now edit the *Journal of Political Ecology*. To teach a graduate seminar in political ecology was a natural step. We were surrounded by threatened desert ecosystems, artificial lawns, land wrested from local peoples, and all the trappings of Western power-politics. Yet key departures at UofA, the deadening hand of current US politics, and worries over my family's temporary visa status have prompted a further move (winning me the "Grass is Always Greener" award - highly appropriate if you know Tucson's environmental conditions - and a substantial roasting, at the Departmental dinner this year!). I am joining an emerging hub of activity in Melbourne, where there are groups of faculty and students at Monash, RMIT and U. Melbourne, good PhD and Masters possibilities, and a strong environmentalist presence.

One of my key points over the years as editor is that cultural and political ecology are truly international (see previous issues of this *Newsletter*, and the Centennial plenary session commentaries to be published here soon). So Australia is not that far. While many of us conduct research overseas, our audiences are firmly at home in our universities and journals. Yet our field has always operated with a series of "nodes" in places like southern California and London, where the quotient of nature-society geographers is above average, with more isolated researchers spread out mainly in North America. Or so it seems. The message I have tried to impart in the *Newsletter* is that the nodes and networks are far more widespread, multi-lingual, and exist in cognate fields. Since ours is the only group in geography devoted to the field, internationalization is something CAPE needs to promote - there are no comparable specialty groups in other countries. Thus, the role of academic networks like ours is not only to reach out, but also to absorb, read, and network with the work of international scholars.

In my case, the field has been attractive not only because of its analytical power - to explain everything from West African drought management to international development failures - but also because it signals the importance of environmental concerns and "loss" in a fast-changing world. It can make empirically justifiable arguments about land use change, environmental quality, and sustainability that result

from the pace of globalization, development, profligate resource use and everyday activity, both here in the USA and internationally. I see fast-changing human-environment relationships everywhere I travel - perhaps an unhealthy geographical obsession! Cultural and political ecology, for me, is more than a set of analytical techniques, and is not constrained to the academic environment in North America. I think some of our Award winners, and Group members, share this ecumenical view - at least I hope so.

The *Newsletter* has moved with me, and it has had three different web addresses over the last five years. It has certainly kept me busy, and I have enjoyed receiving your information, and appropriating more from disparate sources - obscure web sites and conference gossip have certainly played a role. There is something rather satisfying about being your own editor, and circulating information within minutes of its arrival - this, really, is one of the major advantages of the web. I hope the *Newsletter* will flourish as Eric Perramond takes over web editing duties this summer.

Best wishes and thanks for reading. Keep in touch.

Simon Batterbury

New officers

At the Philadelphia AAG meeting, a new slate of Officers were elected. The new Chair is Brad Jokisch of Ohio University. Details [here](#)

Winners of 2004 Netting and Blaut awards

The winner of the 2004 [Robert McC. Netting Award](#) - in recognition of distinguished research and professional activities that bridge geography and anthropology - is Prof. Lawrence Grossman of Virginia Tech. A testimonial by Phil Porter is posted.

Winner of the 2003 [James M. Blaut Award](#) in recognition of innovative scholarship in cultural and political ecology, as demonstrated by publication of *Colonialism and Landscape* (2002, Rowman & Littlefield) is Andrew Sluyter of Louisiana State University.

Winner of the 2004 Student Awards

The outgoing CAPE executive committee is pleased to announce the 2004 recipients of the CAPE student awards.

The 2004 Cultural and Political Ecology [Student Paper Award](#), with its cash prize of \$100, goes to Farhana Sultana, University of Minnesota, for her paper, "Water water everywhere, but not a drop to drink: Analyzing the drinking water crisis in Bangladesh"

The 2004 Cultural and Political Ecology Student [Field Study Award](#), worth \$500, goes to Clark Gray, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, for his proposed project addressing transnational migration and environmental change.

The winners were the best among many excellent entries in both categories. We therefore congratulate all of the student entrants for representing the strong work being proposed and completed by students in the field. *Paul Robbins*

Member's survey 2004

A members survey was launched a few months ago to canvas views on 1) "Which are the three works (articles, books, documentaries, etc.) in the field of cultural/political ecology that have been most influential for you, your work, and/or your way of thinking?" and 2) "What are the most pressing questions to which research in the field should be turned?". Younger faculty members and graduate students were most numerous among the respondents. The result and discussion are reported [here](#).

Paul Robbins

Minutes from 2004 AAG Cultural and Political Ecology Specialty Group Meeting, Philadelphia, 18 March 2004

1. Chair Paul Robbins called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm. Approximately 35 members were in attendance.
2. Minutes from the previous year (March 2003) were approved.
3. Agenda was reviewed; Chair reported on AAG specialty group chairs' meeting, at which specialty groups were encouraged to use the AAG's centralized budget system (CAPE already does), and during which apologies were made for the quality of Centennial program. Also:
 - a. The Chair drew attention to posters summarizing [results](#) of an informal e-mail survey of members. With data from 50+ respondents, the poster tabulated works CAPE members found particularly influential.
 - b. The Chair thanked all participants in the three highly successful CAPE Centennial Sessions on 16 March.
 - c. The Chair reminded students to submit papers and proposals for CAPE [Paper](#) and [Field Study](#) Student awards.
 - d. It was announced that James McCarthy (Penn State) has accepted responsibility for the CAPE listserv. The system is now set up so that "Reply to sender" messages should go to one individual only.
4. Secretary/Treasurer Kendra McSweeney reviewed the current budget. Due to a new accounting system put in place in 2003, it is harder for AAG budget

reporting to be reconciled with a specialty group's own accounting. Nevertheless, according to data collected in 2003 and 2004 regarding expenditures and membership dues, it appears that CAPE can anticipate a \$200-\$300 surplus for fiscal year 2004-2005 (beginning June 2005). Of note:

- a. AAG had not yet implemented the increase in CAPE dues approved by the membership in 2002 (from \$5 to \$6 for faculty). To implement this increase, the incoming Secretary/Treasurer will need to communicate directly with Robert Adelman at the AAG (i.e., NOT with Paul Abel, who does not oversee dues rates).
 - b. Final figures should be available in April 2004.
5. CAPE Website and Newsletter. Simon Batterbury was thanked for his years of service as Webmaster and [Newsletter](#) editor. Eric Perramond (Stetson U.) accepted responsibility for managing the CAPE webpage. This also means managing the CAPE newsletter, in coordination with the CAPE Chair and Executive. The question was raised about how to draw new members' attention to the website. Because AAG is slow to update specialty groups of new members, CAPE members and the Executive were urged to spread the news about the website within their own universities. In future, the new Chair will need to be persistent in requesting periodic updates on membership from AAG.
 6. The election of the new officers for 2004-2006 period was preceded by a brief overview of the duties of each office.
 - a. Paul Robbins noted that the duties of the Chair are to receive and pass on emails; send out a twice-yearly memo to membership (via the listserv); and be official liaison with the AAG, which includes: attending Specialty Group Chairs' Meeting, clearing session sponsorship for AAG meetings, organizing special sessions, and coordinating and announcing awards.
 - b. Kendra McSweeney: duties of the Secretary/Treasurer are to take and record the minutes of annual meetings, to manage the CAPE budget through the AAG (including keeping track of new members, dues, and requests for disbursements), to report on state of budget at annual meeting, and to read and evaluate student awards.
 - c. Regional Councilors (three) read and evaluate student awards, and to work with the Chair to organize sessions for AAG meetings.
 - d. Student Representative(s): to read and evaluate student awards, and to act as liaison between CAPE and graduate students
 7. Nominations were then opened for the new [Officers](#).

- a. Brad Jokisch (Ohio University) was nominated as Chair and unanimously approved.
 - b. Anthony Abbott was nominated as Secretary/Treasurer and unanimously approved.
- c. Regional Councilors:
- i. Bill Moseley (Macalaster; Central Councilor)—approved unanimously
 - ii. James McCarthy (PSU; Eastern Councilor)—approved unanimously
 - iii. Dereka Rushbrook (Arizona; Western Councilor)—approved unanimously. It was noted that Dereka is ABD, but PhD conferral is considered imminent.
 - iv. Student Representative(s): There were three nominees for this position: Michael Goodman (UCSC), Gabriela Valdivia (U Minnesota), and Deb Sinha (Clark). Each candidate introduced themselves and briefly described their work. Rather than voting to elect a single student Rep, the Chair proposed that CAPE rules be amended to accept up to three student Reps, reflecting as much as possible the three regions used to elect Councilors. The motion was approved; the three nominees were then approved.
8. The Chair announced the winners of the [Netting Award](#) (Lawrence Grossman) and the [Blaut Award](#) (Andrew Sluyter). Neither recipient was present to accept their awards but it was noted that each had already extended thanks and appreciation to CAPE.
 9. The membership thanked the Chair, Paul Robbins, for his leadership during 2002-04. The Chair then thanked the outgoing board for their work.
 10. Diana Liverman moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm.

Recorded by Susannah McCandless and Kendra McSweeney; submitted to CAPE Chair by K. McSweeney 20 April 2004.

Calls; conferences, meetings, publications

Environment, Development and Sustainability: a multidisciplinary approach to the theory and practice of Sustainable Development is a journal that has been going since 1999. Although occasionally publishing some doom-watcher articles about long term sustainability and population-environment relationships, it looks to be a good outlet.

The *Journal of Transdisciplinary Environmental Studies* is a free web journal published by Roskilde University in Denmark. Watch it evolve. The people at Roskilde are great - and include geographers, environmental scientists, and international development specialists.

Conference Announcement: "Environmental Justice abroad." New Brunswick, New Jersey, October 16, 2004. Sponsored by the Graduate Program in Geography, Rutgers University. Recent efforts to apply the key concepts of third world political ecology to core industrialized countries, and parallel moves to extend environmental justice analysis to resource management conflicts on the periphery represent some of the most exciting new developments in geography and related disciplines. The Rutgers Graduate Program in Geography now invites participation in a one-day conference devoted to the theme: "Environmental Justice Abroad." This is the second of two events organized under the rubric: "Political Ecology at Home/Environmental Justice Abroad" (the first was held in 2003). Scholars interested in participating in the "Environmental Justice Abroad" workshop on October 16, 2004 should submit a 200-word abstract of a proposed paper topic and two-page *curriculum vitae* to conference organizers by June 15, 2004. Pending receipt of sufficient funding, as many as a dozen scholars may be invited to attend, with one or two slots reserved for advanced graduate students. Organizers will respond with formal invitations and additional details on the conference format by early August to facilitate timely travel planning. General inquiries about the conference may be directed to any of the organizers listed below. Guest scholars will have all travel expenses covered by the conference and will receive a small honorarium. Conference proceedings will be featured on the Rutgers Geography Program website in order to provide access for those who cannot attend in person. One peer-reviewed journal has already expressed an interest in publishing the conference proceedings.

Environmental justice scholars have traditionally been concerned with urban and industrial settings and the disproportionate burden of hazardous wastes and noxious land uses borne by poor communities and communities of color in advanced capitalist countries. Recent contributions to this literature have, however, sought to extend this mode of analysis to geographical settings within the global south. They have also expanded the field's scope of inquiry beyond questions related to distributive justice (equality of benefits/burdens) to embrace civil rights (environmental racism), public participation (democratic decision-making), social justice (political-economic, social and cultural power relations), and ecological sustainability (inter-generational ethics). The proposed conference has been organized to explore both these new concepts and their application by scholars and activists in new global contexts.

Conference organizers: Richard Schroeder, 732/445-4019;
Email: rschroed@rci.rutgers.edu, Kevin St. Martin, 732/445-7394;

Email: kstmarti@rci.rutgers.edu, Bradley Wilson, PhD Candidate Ph: 732/729-1468;
Email: bradwils@yahoo.com.

Conference organizers invite participation by critical human geographers, anthropologists, environmental sociologists and others whose work makes an original contribution to this growing field of inquiry, perhaps by addressing one or more of the following themes. Papers adopting explicit north/south comparative frameworks are especially welcome:

- Justice concepts embedded in diverse legal systems
- Justice and rights discourse
- Property, tenure and resource access
- Indigeneity and sovereignty
- Moral economies
- Private/public property disputes
- EJ movements abroad
- Transnational movement linkages
- Gender justice
- Toxic geographies
- Eminent domain and the state
- Scales of justice
- Regulation and resistance
- International environmental racism
- Class-based environmental injustice
- Justice and market dynamics
- Globalization

Trees, Rain and Politics in Africa. The dynamics and politics of climatic and environmental change. St Anthony's College, University of Oxford, UK, 29th September - 1st October 2004. An interdisciplinary symposium on diverse aspects of the science, social science and politics of environmental change in Africa. **Hosts:** [William Beinart](#), St Anthony's College, Oxford. [Dan Brockington](#), SoGE, University of Oxford. [Wendy James](#), University of Oxford. [Paul Lane](#), British Institute in Eastern Africa, Nairobi. [Michael Sheridan](#), University of Vermont. Enquiries to: Dan Brockington, School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, Mansfield Rd, Oxford, OX1 3TB, UK. dan.brockington@geog.ox.ac.uk Further details on the conference are provided [online](#). Preliminary session headings are:

1. Climate Change.
2. Palaeoecology and Archaeology.
3. Recent Environmental Histories.
4. Histories and Social Studies of Science.
5. Vegetation change, remote sensing and resource use.
6. The winners and losers of degradation and regeneration.
7. Environmental change and political discourse in states and villages.

The Sahara: Past, Present & Future. The University of East Anglia (UEA), UK. 22-24 June, 2004. UEA Saharan Studies Programme & ESRC as part of the ESRC's Social Science Week. The Conference will be divided, very broadly, into three main fields: Archaeology and prehistory, The Physical environment, Recent History & Contemporary Social & Political Issues. The Journal of North African Studies will be publishing at least one Special Issue of selected conference papers.

The Conference is therefore keen to attract papers from geographers, social and political scientists, historians, economists, archaeologists, as well as all other researchers working on Saharan/North Africa issues. Note that the Conference includes the Sahelian zones of Mali, Niger, Chad and Sudan. For details regarding conference programme, submission of papers, registration fee, accommodation and travel arrangements, see: www.uea.ac.uk/sahara. Jeremy Keenan sahara@uea.ac.uk

International Symposium on Energy Production with Agricultural Carbon Utilization. June 10-11, 2004 Athens, GA USA. Topics Discussed Terra Preta Soils - Sustainable Agriculture - Renewable Energy - Sustainable Energy - Greenhouse Gas Stabilization - Soil Fertility - Crop Productivity - Energy Crop Viability - Carbon Credits - Viability of World Carbon Targets. For more information and to register: Visit the conference web site at <http://www.georgiainp.org/carbon> [includes talks by Denevan, Hecht, Erickson, Woods!]

The ***University of Manchester, UK***, has formed a [School of Environment and Development](#) as part of a university merger with nearby UMIST. The title alone is appealing to cultural and political ecologists. The new School, directed by physical geographer Prof. Clive Agnew, comprises the Institute for Development Policy and Management, and the Departments of Geography, Architecture and Planning. Prominent School members include Prof. Tony Bebbington of IDPM, and Noel Castree in Geography. Both Geography and IDPM offer a range of study opportunities to graduates. The new merger creates one of the largest universities in Britain.

Members' (or those who should be..) News

Phil Porter (emeritus, University of Minnesota) has been awarded 2004 Lifetime Achievement Honors from the AAG, for his contributions to human and physical geography. Phil was also the first winner of the CPESG Netting Award in 1996.

Susanne Freidberg (Dartmouth College) has been promoted to tenure - the first geographer working in our field to obtain tenure in the ivy league universities for some years (Dartmouth is the last remaining geography department in an ivy league university)!

Bill Adams (Cambridge University) has received the 2004 Busk Medal from the Royal Geographical Society (UK) for his interdisciplinary research on "conservation and sustainable development in Africa".

Michael Watts (Berkeley) has received the 2004 Victoria Medal from the Royal Geographical Society (UK) for his research on "political economy, culture and power".

Hires

Jeffrey Sasha Davis (PhD student, Penn State University) was appointed assistant professor of geography, University of Vermont, in fall 2003.

Jude L Fernando (visiting assistant professor, University of Arizona) has been appointed assistant professor, Dept. of International Development, Community and Environment, Clark University from Aug 2004.

Brian King (PhD student, University of Colorado) has been appointed assistant professor, Department of Geography, University of Texas, Austin, from August 2004.

Kathy McAfee (assistant professor, Yale University) has been appointed Executive Director of Food First - The Institute For Food and Development Policy, CA, from May 2004.

Firooza Pavri (assistant professor, Emporia State University , Ph.D. Ohio State) has been appointed assistant professor, University of Southern Maine, from August 2004.

John Unruh (associate professor, Indiana University) has been appointed associate professor, McGill University, Canada, from August 2004.

Book reviews & book announcements All CPESG members, and others, are invited to submit reviews of books that would be of interest to our Specialty Group. Publishers are invited to send books to the Editor, and willing reviewers are sought.

This page was maintained by Simon Batterbury (his last issue) – please e-mail the Editor for any changes or corrections (5.19.05).

