

**AAG 2015 Animal Geography Specialty Group Business Meeting Minutes**  
**23 April 2015**  
**Chicago, IL**

Present: Julie Urbanik, Harvey Neo, Jody Emel, Anita Hagy Ferguson, Suzi Wiseman, Shari Wilcox, Juan DeGuara, Mona Seymour

Present via speakerphone: Monica Ogra

Meeting begins 12:02pm

**1. Welcome and updates (J. Urbanik)**

- There are 18 AnGSG sponsored sessions at this AAG
- Congratulations to the following: (1) Lauren van Patter (University of Guelph) announced as winner of graduate student paper competition, “Of place or of people: exploring the spatial dimensions of human-feral cat relations in southern Ontario” (2) Rosemary Collard and Katie Gillespie, and Jody Emel and Harvey Neo, for new books (*Critical Animal Geographies* and *The Political Ecology of Meat*), (3) Connie Johnston is a finalist for the AAG’s J. Warren Nystrom Award. Her paper, “The political science of farm animal welfare in the US and EU” is scheduled for presentation during the Nystrom Award II session on Friday.

**2. Budget and membership report (J. Urbanik)**

- Current balance is \$1286; thanks to Monica Ogra for recent \$100 donation; \$226 collected during Fall 2014 registration
- Expenses for upcoming year are: \$200 to grad student paper award winner, \$120 for website
- Approximately 163 registered members

**3. Elections/changes to the board:** The following executive board positions were opened for self-nomination prior to elections. Matt Rosenblum (outgoing Graduate Officer) was thanked for his service.

- Chairperson (3 year term)
- Secretary-Treasurer (3 year term)
- General Board Member #1 (2 year term)
- General Board Member #2 (2 year term)
- General Board Member #3 (2 year term)
- Graduate Student Officer (1 year term)

Self-nominations came from the floor and from Angela Parker (who submitted an email summarizing her qualifications and interest). A brief discussion of duties and expectations associated with board membership took place to clarify questions as part of this process. Monica and Julie explained how they have divided work between the two positions and that they have essentially functioned as co-chairs for the past 6 years, although the Chair and Sec-Treasurer do oversee different administrative tasks (as outlined in the bylaws). They will provide an overview document for incoming Chair and Sec-Treasurer to help in the transition to new leadership.

Meeting attendees agreed to fill the board positions as follows:

- Chair: Mona Seymour (3 year term)
- Secretary/Treasurer: Jody Emel (1 year interim term to help start staggered terms for the Chair and Secretary/Treasurer)
- Graduate Student Officer: Angela Parker (1 year term)
- General Board Member: Harvey Neo (at least 1 year term)
- General Board Member: Monica Ogra (for 1 year interim term)
- General Board Member: Suzi Wiseman (at least 1 year term)

Shari Wilcox will stay as Communications Officer and Anita Hagy Ferguson will stay as one of the Graduate Student Officers.

#### **4. Discussion: Governance Issues and Service Needs**

##### **a) Participation issues**

- RE: Staffing board positions – Decision to do active outreach over coming year to members, in order to fill board positions undertaken for interim/1-year terms
- RE: Membership/Visibility – Suzi Wiseman noted many animal geography-related sessions were not flagged as such; volunteered to perform AAG 2016 abstract search and reach out to sessions with offer of AnGSG sponsorship
- RE: Membership/Visibility – Possibility of hosting a reception; noted that AAG has seed money for this.

##### **b) Executive Board structure and function:**

- Discussion about staggering board terms: Decision to begin staggering the Chair and Secretary/Treasurer positions, beginning 2016, with election of new Secretary/Treasurer for a 3 year term.
- Decision that General Board Member positions will be staggered, effective now with Harvey and Monica agreeing to one year interim terms.

- We agreed that we do not have to change the bylaws at this time because we like the term limits we have, we just needed to be able to start to stagger them so we don't end up with such huge turnover
- Julie noted that there is no official policy about governance or filled board positions from the AAG, so groups are really on their own as to how to govern and how to fill any gaps.
- Decision to retain the structure of Chair and Secretary/Treasurer positions

**c) Discussion about whether to open Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, General Board Member positions to graduate students:**

- Decision that Chair and Secretary/Treasurer positions will continue to be filled by group members further along in their careers (i.e., not graduate students)
- Decision to open General Board Member positions to graduate students (to be reflected in bylaws – Julie will revise bylaws and circulate for approval and posting – see bylaws Article 5, Paragraph 1 and Article 5, 1d and 1e)

**5. Discussion of bibliography medium (Refworks v. Zotero)**

- Discussion of whether to stay with Refworks or move to Zotero resulted in the following decisions: (1) Switch to Zotero and link to it on our website, (2) Decision to keep Refworks alive for those already using it
- Discussion of whether to keep membership (permits editing) to Zotero within board or extend to all group members resulted in the following decisions: (1) Decision to limit membership to board, (2) Decision to assign maintenance, editing duties to a Graduate Student Officer

**6. Planning for AAG 2016 (San Francisco)**

- Discussion about field trip possibilities. Monica Ogra will look into options around backyard chicken keeping. Anita Hagy Ferguson to look into options around human-wildlife relations in SF. Animal shelters or refuges?
- Jody Emel suggested that the SG consider organization of a plenary speaker event. We may need to fundraise from group to pay for transportation, hotel, meals; honorarium. Speaker idea possibilities were briefly discussed.
- Discussion about social gathering possibilities. Anita Hagy Ferguson to look into location options for a cocktail hour. Possibility of a BYOB gathering.

Officially adjourned 1:10pm

## **7. Open floor, post-meeting**

Suggestion that we design a survey for AnGSG members: Their areas of study/interest; what they need/want from the group; barriers to becoming more involved in the group.

Submitted by Mona Seymour, Revised by Monica Ogra and Julie Urbanik, Sent for Approval to Exec Board on 4/29, Approved by Exec Board on 4/30.