



**PAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF  
GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

Specialized Organization of the  
Organization of American States

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**UNITED STATES NATIONAL SECTION**

**2009 Annual Report**

**Website**

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# Pan American Institute of Geography and History

## United States National Section

### Annual Report, 2009

#### Introduction

The United States of America National Section (USNS) of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) is pleased to submit this report of the activities of the Section for 30 September 2008 through 1 October 2009. Included are reports from the Geography, History, Cartography, and Geophysics Commission representatives from within the USNS. Summaries of significant activities and meetings are included in each of the Commission reports. Also included in this report is the USNS roster.

The USNS 2009 annual meeting was held at the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colorado on 21-22 April 2009. Mr. Bruce Presgrave, of the USGS served as the host for this meeting.



Mr. Mark DeMulder and Ms. Jean Parcher continue to serve as the USNS President and Vice President, respectively. Ms. Maria O'Brien was appointed Executive Secretary of the USNS. Additionally, Dr. David Robinson of Syracuse University was appointed as

the Principal US Representative to the Commission on Geography and Dr. Eric Langer of Georgetown University was appointed principal US Representative to the Commission on History.

The US National Section was well represented at the Directing Council Meeting held in San Salvador, El Salvador, on 19-21 November 2008. Also during this reporting period, Dr. David Robinson accepted the responsibility to serve as the editor for the *Revista Geográfica*.

During the reporting period Ambassador Hector Morales arranged for the payment of the United States quota at 57.59% for a total of US \$323,900 to PAIGH.

## Geography Commission

**Dr. David J. Robinson**, Syracuse University (Representative)

Since his appointment in the Spring of 2009, following meetings with Jean Parcher and Leslie Armstrong during the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers in Granada, Nicaragua, in January, 2009, David Robinson, the new Representative, has been able to attract a highly productive and active group of colleagues (see below) to assist in developing United States' participation in the PAIGH Geography Commission. He sees as key elements in such development:

1. The need for much more participation by US Latin Americanist geographers in the projects and publications of PAIGH. This will hopefully be achieved via Commission members' contacts with colleagues in the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers (CLAG), of which Robinson is the Executive Director.
2. The further development of PAIGH's *Revista Geográfica* as a high-quality peer-reviewed online journal that will attract international contributions both from the Americas and Europe in English as well as Spanish, Portuguese and French.
3. The development of a single major multi-year interdisciplinary project that will attract financial support from beyond PAIGH that normally can only fund small-scale projects. Such a project (e.g. natural hazards: consequences and solutions) would necessarily require the participation of members from all four Commissions.
4. The institution of regional (e.g. Andean America, Central America, etc.) meetings and working groups of PAIGH Geo-Commission members to assess the institutional state of geography (staffing, research, syllabi, etc.) in relevant universities and institutes.
5. To seek external funding to establish annual Geo-Commission prizes for geographical work in three distinct areas: teaching, research, and institution-building.
6. To promote the development of web sites for each of the national Geo-Commissions to extend knowledge both of their membership and work.

7. To evaluate the role and impact of courses offered by CEPEIGE over the last decade or more. Given that funding for this organization involves more than half of the Geography Commission's annual budget it has to be demonstrated that geography as a discipline, and professional geographers, are benefitting significantly.

Some 225 Latin Americanist geographers attended the *Conference of Latin American Geographers* (CLAG) meeting held in Granada, Nicaragua, January 7-9, 2009, when more than eighty papers were presented. A notable feature of the event was the presence of many colleagues from Central American countries which allowed several members of the USNS to get to know them and their interests.

**USNS Representative: Dr. David Robinson:**

*Publications:*

*A son de caja y voz de pregonero: Bandos de Buen Gobierno de la ciudad de Mérida, Venezuela, 1776-1810.* (with E. Samudio) Academia Nacional de la Historia, Caracas, Venezuela (in press)

*Collaguas IV: Cabanaconde, Sociedad, economía y población, 1596-1645.* Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (in press)

*Professional service:*

Executive Director, *Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers*

*Editorial positions*

Editor, *Journal of Latin American Geography* [volume 8 (1& 2), 2009]

*Editorial boards:*

*Revista Geográfica de América Central* (Heredia, Costa Rica)

*Latin American Research Review*

*Meridiano: Revista de Geografía* (Buenos Aires)

*Pangea* (Guadalajara)

*Región* (Cali, Colombia)

*Historia Crítica* (Bogotá, Colombia)

*Revista Universitaria de Geografía* (Bahía Blanca, Arg.)

*Edificar* (Mérida, Venezuela)

Association of American Geographers, AAAmiga project

*Webpage designer and manager of listservs*

Designer/manager of USPAIGH webpage (<http://sites.maxwell.syr.edu/paigh>)

Designer/manager of PAIGH Geography Commission webpage

(<http://sites.maxwell.syr.edu/paigh/geocomm.htm>)

Designer/manager of the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers (CLAG) site (<http://sites.maxwell.syr.edu/clag/clag.htm>)

Designer/manager of Latin American Specialty Group webpage of Association of American Geographers (AAG) (<http://sites.maxwell.syr.edu/clag/lasg.htm>)

Designer/manager of the *Edificar* journal web site (<http://sites.maxwell.syr.edu/edificar/edificar.htm>)

Designer/manager of webpage for Archbishopric Archive, Arequipa, Peru (<http://sites.maxwell.syr.edu/clag/arequipa/aaa.htm>)

Manager of CLAGnet, listserv of the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers

Manager of USPAIGH listserv for US National Section members

Manager of USGEOPAIGH listserv for US Geography Commission members

Dr. Robinson conducted three months field and archival research in Mérida, Venezuela, during the summer of 2009, preparing two monographs: *Estanques: A Colonial Venezuelan Hacienda* (with Dra. Edda Samudio), and *El correo colonial de Nueva Granada: Informe de don Antonio Pando* (forthcoming Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá). He has also prepared a pre-proposal for PAIGH: "Online Courses in Geography for Latin American Universities."

**Dr. Robert B. Kent**, California State University, Northridge (Alternate Representative)

#### *Publications*

"Residential Toponyms and Urban Change (1890–2000) in a Seaside Resort Town, Benicàssim, Spain," *Names* vol. 57(2): 107–134 (with Vicent Ortells)

"The Americas." In *The International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (eds.) (with Kevin Butler) (in press).

### **Geography and Regional Development** (Working Committee)

**Dr. Andrew Sluyter**, Louisiana State University

(on sabbatical leave)

**Dr. James J. Biles**, City College, The City University of New York

#### *Publications*

"Globalization, geography and the liberation of overseas study," *Journal of Geography* 108(3): 148-154 (with T. Lindley).

"Informal work in Latin America: Recent debates and competing perspectives," *Geography Compass* 3(1): 214-236.

(et al.) “Globalization of food retailing in southeastern Mexico: Transformation of supply networks and consequences for small-scale agricultural producers.” In N. Coe and N. Wrigley (eds.), *The Globalization of Retailing*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

*Editor*

“Geography, Geographers and Overseas Study”, Special issue of *Journal of Geography*, vol. 108(3) (with G. Veeck)

*Presentations*

“Post-maquila possibilities? The demise of maquiladora employment and rural livelihood strategies in Yucatán, Mexico.” Latin American Studies Association, Rio de Janeiro.

“Chronicle of a debt foretold: Mexico’s FOBAPROA debacle and lessons for the U.S. financial crisis.” Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Las Vegas.

“¿Valor o valores? Redes de producción globales y desarrollo regional en México.” Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers, Granada, Nicaragua.

“Making space for small-scale producers in global production networks: Towards an alternative ethics of social responsibility. Global Retail, Global Responsibilities,” Economic and Social Research Council, Royal Geographical Society, London.

*Professional Service*

Board of Directors, Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers

President, West Lakes Division of the Association of American Geographers

Member, Publications Committee, Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers

**Geographical Education** (Working Committee)

**Dr. Betty Smith**, Eastern Illinois University

*Publications:*

“Application of Seriation to Relative Urban Housing Quality Classification in Ecuador and Bolivia,” *Papers of the Applied Geography Conferences*.

“Ancient Trail Mapping in Highland Ecuador,” in the GIS section of the *Digital Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Education User Conference*.

“Urban Population Density in Three Intermediate Size Cities of South America,” *Papers of the Applied Geography Conferences* (in press)

“Urban Population Density Analysis and Visualization of Central City Morphology in the Andean City of Ibarra, Ecuador,” *International Journal of Applied Geospatial Research* (forthcoming).

“Population and Urbanization in Latin America,” *Geographische Rundschau, English International Edition*, Braunschweig, Germany (forthcoming)

Dr. Smith presented seven research papers at conferences: The Florida Society of Geographers (FSG) and the California Geographical Society (CGS); Midwest Association of Latin American Studies (MALAS); West Lakes Regional Meeting of the Association of American Geographers; Applied Geography Conference (AGC); Association of American Geographers (AAG); Education User Conference of Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI).

*Professional service:*

Board of Directors, AAG Developing Geographies Specialty Group

Board of Directors, Midwest Association for Latin American Studies (MALAS)

Chair and organizer of paper session on “*Cities and Urban Regions in Latin America*,” Las Vegas, Association of American Geographers

Co-organizer of paper session on “*International Planning and Urban Issues*,” Las Vegas, Association of American Geographers

Chaired paper session on “*Chávez and Lula: Two Sides of the Latin American New Left*,” San Juan, Puerto Rico, MALAS

Chaired paper session on “*Ethnic Geography and Migration*,” Bloomington, Indiana, West Lakes Division of the AAG.

Chaired paper session, “*Political Geography*,” St. Augustine, Florida, Florida Society of Geographers.

Dr. Smith also engaged in field work to collect data in Ecuador in late August 2008 and during an Ecuador study abroad trip July-August, 2009.

**Dr. Edward Jackiewicz**, California State University Northridge

*Publications*

“Destination Panama: An Examination of the Retirement-Tourism-Foreign Investment Nexus” (under review).

### *Presentations*

“Destination Panama: An Examination of the Retirement, Tourism and Foreign Exchange Nexus.” Association of American Geographers, 105th Annual Meeting, Las Vegas.

In January Dr. Jackiewicz organized and led a field course to highland Peru, and in July conducted fieldwork on residential tourism in Belize

### **Techniques, Methods and Geographical Information** (Working Committee)

**Dr. Peter Herlihy**, University of Kansas

### *Publications*

(ed.) *Ethno- and Historical Geographic Research in Latin America: Essays Honoring William V. Davidson*. Geoscience Publications, Department of Geography and Anthropology, Louisiana State University. (*Geoscience and Man*, vol. 40) (with Kent Mathewson and Craig Revels)

(et al.) “The Certification and Privatization of Indigenous Lands in Mexico,” *Journal of Latin American Geography*, 8(2):175-208.

### *Presentations*

“Undoing the Revolution: Deconstructing Neoliberal Land Reforms within Indigenous Mexico,” Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers, Granada, Nicaragua.

“La investigación cartográfica participativa: su epistemología,” *Reunión Nacional de Geografía 2008*, Victoria de Durango, Durango, Mexico (with Derek A. Smith and Miguel Aguilar Robledo)

### *Professional service*

Contributing Editor on Central America, *Handbook of Latin American Studies*, US. Library of Congress.

Member, International Editorial Board, *Journal of Latin American Geography*

**Dr. Marcellus Caldas**, Kansas State University

### *Publications:*

Caldas, Marcellus (et al.) “Road Networks and Forest Fragmentation in the Amazon: Explanations for Local Differences with Implications for Conservation and Development.” *Journal of Latin American Geography* 7(2): 85-104.

(et al.) “Doing it for themselves: Direct Action Land Reform in the Brazilian Amazon,” *World Development* (forthcoming).

(et al.) “Ranching and the new global range: Amazônia in the 21st century,” *Geoforum* (forthcoming)

(et al.) “Deforestation and Small Holders in Amazonia”. In: *Amazonia and Global Change*, Michael Keller, John Gash, Pedro Silva Dias (eds.). LBA/NASA (forthcoming)

(et al.) “Can Protected Areas Protect the Amazon?” *Proceedings of National Academy of Science*. Vol. 106(26): 10582-10586.

(et al.) “A Economia da Amazonia Hoje and Amanha: Integracao da National e a Expansao da Oferta”. In *Amazônia: natureza e sociedade em transformação* M. Batistella, E.F.Moran, D.S. Alves (eds.). University of São Paulo Press.

(et al.) “A Guerra Amazônica pela Terra no Sul do Pará”. In *Sociedade, território e conflitos: BR-163 em questão*, Edna Castro (ed.). Núcleo de Altos Estudos Amazônicos. Universidade Federal do Pará.

(et al.) “Road Building, land use and climate change: prospects for environmental governance in the Amazon”. *Philosophical Transactions of Royal Society, B*. Vol. 363, No.1498.

#### *Presentations:*

“Optically stimulated luminescence dating of young spit and bar deposits from the Rio Tapajós, Brazil”, 2009 Portland GSA Annual Meeting (18-21 October 2009).

“Land Reform Settlements in the Brazilian Amazon: New drivers of LCLUC,” Presented at International Scientific Conference Amazon in Perspective Integrated Science for a Sustainable Future. Large Scale Biosphere-Atmosphere Project in the Amazon (LBA/NASA), Manaus, Brazil.

### **Land Use and Environmental Management (Working Committee)**

**Dr. David Keeling**, Western Kentucky University

#### *Publications*

“Transportation Geography–Local Challenges, Global Contexts”, *Progress in Human Geography* 33(4): 516-526.

“Latin America’s Transportation Conundrum,” *Journal of Latin American Geography* 7(2): 133-154.

### *Presentations*

“Medellín y Comuna 13: Desde el Borde,” Annual Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers, Granada, Nicaragua.

“Medellín and Comuna 13: Back from the Brink,” Annual Conference of the AAG, Las Vegas.

### *Professional Service*

AGS Bowman Expedition to Colombia, WKYU-FM NPR Midday Edition with Dan Modlin.

Member, International Editorial Board, *Journal of Latin American Geography*

Bowman Expeditions and Human Environment Analysis. Foreign Military Studies Office workshop, University of Kansas, Lawrence, June 2008.

Dr. Keeling also carried out fieldwork in Argentina in June 2009, related to a transportation development workshop and a project on new high-speed line from BA to Córdoba.

**Dr. David Salisbury**, University of Richmond

### *Publications*

“Coca and Conservation: Cultivation, Eradication, and Trafficking in the Amazon Borderlands.” *Geojournal* (in press) (with Chris Fagan).

“GIS maps and the Amazon borderlands,” in *Mapping Latin America: Space and Society, 1492-2000*, Karl Offen and Jordana Dym (eds.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press (forthcoming)

“Extractive Reserves.” In *The Encyclopedia of Geography*, Barney Warf (ed.). Sage Publications (forthcoming).

### *Presentations*

“Conservation, Development and Inequality in the Amazon Borderlands,” XXVII International Congress of Latin American Studies Association, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

“Trans-boundary Political Ecology: Scaling Fronteras Vivas in the Amazon Borderlands,” Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers, Granada, Nicaragua.

“GIS Maps and the Amazon Borderlands,” Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers, Granada, Nicaragua.

### *Workshop*

“Research Priorities in Latin American Environmentalism,” XXVII International Congress of Latin American Studies Association, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

*Sessions co-organized and chaired*

“Amazonian Development, Environment, and Inequality Sessions (I, II, & III),” at XXVII International Congress of Latin American Studies Association, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

“Borders, Politics, and Frontiers,” Session of Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers, Granada, Nicaragua.

*Invited Talks*

“Fronteras Amazónicas: Un Análisis de su Conservación y Desarrollo”, Universidad Nacional de Ucayali, Pucallpa, Perú.

“Engaging the Invisible Amazonian: Conservation, Development and Indigenous People,” Bonner Center for Civic Engagements, University of Richmond, VA.

*Professional service*

Member, Board of Directors, Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers.

Dr. Salisbury also spent ten weeks this summer working with three students on three separate research strands involving Amazonian indigenous territories: fisheries, palm use, and home-gardens. The students spent four weeks in Peru and three in the Peruvian Amazon. Each was paired with a Universidad Nacional de Ucayali student and conducted research on their respective topic. The results are still being analyzed.

## **Cartography Commission**

Leslie Armstrong, Representative

### **Technical Committees and Working Groups**

The US National Section (USNS) Cartographic Commission has many new members this year, providing a revitalization of staff and activities, as well as broader US participation across the federal and non-federal sector. Liam O’Brien, Director, Office of the Americas at the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA), is serving as my alternate. Merrill Lyew and Carmelle Terbourgh on the Geospatial Data Infrastructure Committee have joined us from international management positions at the Environmental Systems and Research Institute (ESRI) and Eric L. Villalobos is the new principle member for the Hydrography Technical Committee. Eric is a Regional Coordinator, US Southern Command, at the Naval Meteorology & Oceanography office in Stennis, Mississippi. Paul Cooper and Gregg Badger have initiated the US chaired,

Institutional Strengthening and Technical Cooperation Committee (ISTC) and proactively developing relationships with the International Hydrographic Organization and the international Group on Earth Observations behalf of PAIGH. John Gates and John Tomasovich, both of NGA, are serving as the Advisory Committee, providing decades of in-country Latin American experience with and knowledge of national mapping institutes to our members.

The USNS Cartographic Commission has contributed to shaping strategic planning, outreach and communications through fact sheets and convening several meetings. Several of these resulting in proposals for projects and workshops for the coming year: a Meta-Portal for the Americas, Preparing for Natural Disasters Workshop and Central American Map of the Americas Workshop. The USNS Cartographic Commission has also played an instrumental role to the larger institute by developing an innovative restructuring recommendation for a streamlined and cross cutting approach to PAIGH Cartography issues and activities to be presented at the General Assembly in Quito Ecuador.

### **Geospatial Data Infrastructure Committee**

This newly formed committee has developed an inventory of relevant Latin American websites that are posted for reference on the USNS website. The vision is to develop a network of all regional and sub-regional, and national projects in a single meta-portal in support of building the region's spatial data infrastructure (SDI).

### **Geographic Names (Working Group)**

The José Joaquín Hungría Morell Geographic Names Course for 2009 has not yet been held. The course is scheduled to be held October 18 – 30, 2009 in Madrid, Spain at the Instituto Geográfico Nacional. The course is normally held in a member State of PAIGH, but is being held in Spain (an observer to PAIGH) by special request and by special dispensation. Much of the Working Group's activities and collaborations during the year were spent in preparation for presenting the course this year. Additionally, members fielded questions regarding the course from the international toponymic community and especially from the Working Group on Training of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), which sanctions (since 1996) this course as an official international toponymic training course in accordance with guidelines of UNGEGN.

### **Global Map of the Americas (MGA) (Working Group)**

During the PAIGH Directing Council meeting in San Salvador, El Salvador November 19-21, 2008, Jean Parcher and Leslie Armstrong held an informal meeting with the Geography Directors of the participating countries in Central America. Afterwards four nations of Central America (Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Guatemala) and Mexico agreed to support the technical proposal for the Central America Data

Integration and Technical Capacity Building Workshop. Ms. Parcher submitted the proposal to PAIGH and has received notice that the proposal received a favorable response. Ms. Parcher has been requested to attend the Consultation meeting of Cartography in Quito. In addition Ms. Parcher will provide a short update on the current status of the Global Map of the Americas project.

Due to her experience in integrating data across borders, Jean Parcher was invited to participate in the kick off meeting for the Proyecto Mesoamerica Data Integration for Reducing the Risks of Natural Disasters in Central America. The meeting was held in Panama City from June 5-7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Currently the Interdevelopment Bank has awarded the Centro del Agua del Trópico Húmedo para América Latina y Caribe (CATHALAC) with funding to coordinate this effort within the region. CATHALAC hosted the meeting with attendees from all countries in Central America and Mexico. Ms. Parcher provided two presentations; “Mapping Across Borders – Experience with Mexico and U.S.”, and “Proposal for a Central America Data Integration Workshop”.

USGS scientists, Jean Parcher and Ivan DeLoatch were invited speakers at the United Nations 9th Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas in New York on August 10 – 14<sup>th</sup>. The Regional Cartographic Conference takes place every four years and includes delegations from National Geography Agencies throughout the Americas. Ms. Parcher presented a paper on the multi-disciplinary U.S.-Mexico Border Environmental Health Initiative and the Binational U.S.-Mexico Border Geographic Information System. Mr. DeLoatch presented on current Federal Geographic Data Committee activities. Other USGS participants in the Conference included John Donnelly, Chief Editor of the *National Atlas*, who represented the Global Map project.

During 2009, Jean Parcher has been participating in teleconference calls to plan the next GEOSS in the Americas Forum in Washington DC on November 20, 2009. The major topic of the Forum is Coastal Zones.

#### **Hydrography (Technical Committee)**

No meetings were held this year. A recommendation to transfer the chair to the Brazilian Department of Hydrography and Navigation and to broaden the scope of this committee to relevant arenas such ocean observing has been proposed and endorsed by the USNS.

#### **Aeronautic Charting (Technical Committee)**

Mr. Robert Goodson participates as a member of the International Civil Aeronautical Organization (ICAO) Aeronautical Information Management (AIM) sub group of GREPECAS that has tangential responsibility for ensuring the safe and expeditious exchange of digital/published aeronautical information used in producing aeronautical charts. The most recent advancement to date in the transition to digital data exchange has been the institutional acceptance of Aeronautical Information Management (AIM)

which broadens the current scope of Aeronautical Information (AI). This concept provides the foundation or roadmap for the evolution of digital data libraries that can provide AI quality, integrity and timeliness and enables dynamic context based retrieval that can be used in electronic chart production for states.

In collaboration with the FAA, he planned and organized an Aeronautical Information Exchange Model (AIXM) seminar. The seminar which was facilitated and supported by ICAO and COCESNA occurred in Tegucigalpa Honduras in May of 2009. In attendance were representatives and officials from twelve countries of the region. The participants received briefings and practical exercises that outlined the functionality and capability of the model to capture the wide variety of aeronautical information necessary to manage airspace and aircraft operations and provide a digitized means to easily transfer the data electronically. AIXM is the international standard for the harmonized exchange of aeronautical information.

Mr. Goodson continues to participate in (ICAO) Electronic Mapping task force for the CARSAM region working on organizing a standardized framework for regional production of electronic aeronautical charts. To include, a reference file catalog, quality control and evaluation process, metadata, geospatial data infrastructure, zymology, naming conventions, and applicable international standards.

### **Fundamental Data (Working Group)**

A large scale co-production program workshop is proposed to address multinational co-production using International Standards Organization (ISO) approved specifications. The project will produce, manage (disseminate) and store 1:50,000 – 1:100,000 density vector data over Central America (including Mexico), South America and the Caribbean. The project could significantly improve interoperability between data producers and end users by establishing common map data content, accuracy, standards and exchange format. NGA will provide commercial satellite imagery for the workshop and participating countries are required to bring appropriate data for inclusion. A production plan will be constructed based on quarter degree cells (30 minutes by 30 minutes) of the region. Data produced will be deposited into a data warehouse. Participants will have access to data based on their production contribution.

### **Institutional Strengthening and Technical Cooperation Committee (ISTC)**

The PAIGH Member State responsible for Institutional Strengthening and Technical Cooperation (ISTC) is the United States, chaired by Paul Cooper. ISTC operates under the authority of the Cartographic Commission to promote and increase the transfer of technologies, applications of those technologies, development and capacity building in the geosciences disciplines and GSDI in the Americas. A reorganization of the committee was recently accomplished with new terms of reference and rules of

procedure approved by the Chairman of the Cartographic Commission. A request for member nominations is in progress.

Through the ISTC, PAIGH is being represented as observer in the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO). This facilitates an exchange of information on nautical cartography and hydrographic work of the PAIGH and coordination of activities with the IHO Capacity Building Committee and Regional Hydrographic Commissions. ISTC represented PAIGH in the 4<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference June 2009 and is attending and providing a report to the IHO Meso American Caribbean Hydrographic Commission for PAIGH. A proposed Memorandum of Understanding between PAIGH and IHO is in negotiation.

Comité Centro Americana de Transportes Marítimas (COCATRAM) is a permanent specialized organization within the Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (SICA), with its own Directing Committee and seated in Managua, Nicaragua. COCATRAM serves the maritime and central port development, advising member governments in adopting sustainable policies and decisions regarding foreign trade quality, economy and efficiency of services, shipping and ports, protection and representation of the interests of the region, to those outside the region. On behalf of PAIGH, ISTC has opened negotiation with COCATRAM to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to assist with this work and improve/reverse environmental degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Gulf of Honduras.

ISTC is coordinating with Cartographic Committee of the US National Section to support the Capacity Building and Data Integration Workshop proposed for 2010 in Mexico INEGI.

Iberoamerican Network of Geographic Information Infrastructures reported to PAIGH at the 41st Reunión del Consejo Directivo, San Salvador, El Salvador, 19-21 November, 2008. This is a European Union led by Spain's IGN program to jointly analyze the cooperative capacities of Iberoamerican countries to determine if it is possible to establish a cooperative network between those countries to continue to improve Geographic Information Systems and extend their use as far as possible. A directing committee will be formed consisting of high level cartographic personnel from the Iberoamerican countries. Areas of interest include:

1. Training
2. Research
3. Consultation
4. Dissemination
5. International Projects

ISTC recommends that PAIGH join Group on Earth Observations (GEO) as a Participating Organization. There are currently 56 POs. 11 PAIGH MS are Members of GEO. GEO is constructing the Global Earth Observation Systems of Systems (GEOSS) to address a broad range of societal benefits, notably:

- Reducing loss of life and property from natural and human-induced disasters;
- Understanding environmental factors affecting human health and well-being,
- Improving the management of energy resources,
- Understanding, assessing, predicting, mitigating, and adapting to climate variability and change,
- Improving water resource management through better understanding of the water cycle,
- Improving weather information, forecasting and warning,
- Improving the management and protection of terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems,
- Supporting sustainable agriculture and combating desertification, and
- Understanding, monitoring and conserving biodiversity.

## **Geophysics Commission**

Bruce Presgrave, Representative

At the present time, Costa Rica (Dr. Walter Fernandez, from Universidad de Costa Rica, in San José) is the only country that has presented a candidate to replace the United States (Dr. Carlos Mendoza) as President of the Commission on Geophysics. The US has already occupied the position for 2 4-year terms, so cannot run for that office this term. Dr. Fernandez has been active with projects in PAIGH and he and the Universidad de Costa Rica are well-respected in the field of geophysics. In addition, since the Commission has been led by seismologists for the last 16 years (8 years prior were by Dr. David Novelo of Mexico), we believe that Dr. Fernandez' specialty in meteorology and atmospheric physics will provide a useful change of focus for the Commission. The Geophysics Commission of the US National Section strongly supports the candidacy of Dr. Fernandez.

The US Section of the Commission on Geophysics has submitted one project for approval in 2009. That is the continuation of the Scholarship Program in Geophysics. It has been approved by the USNS and sent to PAIGH Headquarters. The present leadership of the Commission on Geophysics (Carlos Mendoza and Bruce Presgrave) will certainly approve it for funding at the next two Authorities Meetings, but the final decision on approval will be made by the Meeting of Consultation in Quito and the incoming President of the Commission.

For calendar year 2009, there are three projects funded by the Geophysics Commission that are counted as US projects. They are Jimmy Adegoke's workshop on monsoon studies, Carlos Mendoza's Scholarship Program in Geophysics and the funding for the 2009 Meeting of Consultation, which counts as a US project because the United States is currently in charge of the Commission. The funds for the Scholarship Program and the Meeting of Consultation are being managed by PAIGH Headquarters.

Dr. Jill McCarthy, Chief Scientist of the USGS Central Region Geologic Hazards Team announced that plans are continuing to move forward on a joint project between the

USGS and the Centro Regional de Sismología para América del Sur (CERESIS) for seismic hazard and risk mapping in South America. The PAIGH Commission on Geophysics had hosted a symposium on this topic as part of the Technical Meetings of the Commission in Itú, Brazil in 2007. If the larger project does indeed get approved, this will be an example of how relatively small amounts of funding from PAIGH can be "seed money" for much larger projects that develop from them.

Jimmy Adegoke's monsoon workshop is another example of PAIGH meetings and projects helping to bring scientists together to work on common problems. Jimmy and Jorge Amador (from Costa Rica) met each other at the PAIGH General Assembly in Caracas (2005), and realized that they were working on two parts of the same atmospheric phenomenon. The workshop is intended to bring in other researchers from other countries, including Mexico, to initiate further coordinated studies on the North American monsoon

## **History Commission**

Dr. Erick D. Langer, Representative

This year has been one of transition and planning. Michael Conniff, our dynamic and able Representative for the past few years, finished his term and Erick Langer (Georgetown University) has taken over, with Brad Coleman (U.S. Southern Command) as the Executive Secretary.

Dr. Coniff attended the USNS meeting in Colorado Springs Colorado at the USGS Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colorado on 21-22 April 2009. The History Commission is deeply grateful to Mike Conniff for his exemplary service over the years.

One issue that has been problematic in the past and that Langer and Coleman are working on is the scant participation of Latin Americanist historians in PAIGH. One of the major problems we identified is that there is little incentive to work with PAIGH and few people in the Latin Americanist community know about it. We have designed a strategy in which we will provide information on PAIGH in H-LATAM, the Internet discussion group for Latin Americanist historians. In addition, we will provide relevant information on grants available through PAIGH so that historians might gain funding for research and conferences through our organization.

Langer is a member of the General Committee of the Conference of Latin American Historians (CLAH), the most important organization of Latin American historians in the United States, and he will provide information on funding opportunities for historians through PAIGH as well. The CLAH General Committee meets in San Diego in early January 2010, at which time it will be on the agenda.

Brad Coleman has agreed to create a summary sheet that lists the opportunities for grants and scholarships that PAIGH offers, to be publicized in H-LATAM and in the CLAH Newsletter, to make more historians aware of the opportunities for funding from our organization.

We are still in discussion with Frank Robinson at Vanderbilt to provide greater institutional support for the US History Commission. While Langer is now the Acting Director of the Center for Latin American Studies at Georgetown, the financial crisis has severely impacted the Center, making it impossible for the Center to provide more than nominal support. The hope is that major funding for the Center will come through shortly and it, or Vanderbilt, will be able to take on some of the administrative duties plus some funding for travel for Commission members.

The History Commission is also eager to participate in the project on Natural Disasters that David Robinson of the Geography Commission has proposed. Historians can provide the needed historical data and perhaps some funding can be provided through PAIGH grant-giving process for archival research on hurricanes, earthquakes, and El Niño, to name some of the most important disasters. This would be useful for preparing responses for governments in the Americas, as well as Southcom, one of whose main purpose is to respond to these kinds of events throughout hemisphere.

The U.S. history commission has circulated a list of projects that are being pursued in the next several years. These are:

1. Publication of a listing of resources for history of the Americas in U.S. repositories, a project begun years ago but never concluded.
2. Publication of an inventory of digitized resources for history of the Americas in Latin American repositories. Erick Langer serves on the board of the Program for Latin American Libraries and Archives, administered by Harvard with funding from the Mellon Foundation, which support digitization efforts in the hemisphere.
3. Compilation of historical studies of natural disasters in the Americas. Some national history commissions are already working in this field (see above).
4. Collaboration with Hernán Asdrúbal Silva's major study of commerce in the Southern Cone during the 19th century (e-mail [hsilva@criva.edu.ar](mailto:hsilva@criva.edu.ar)). Langer has a strong interest in this area, as would Tom Whigham and others.
5. Organize a North American Conference on history of the hemisphere, as has been done for South America and Central America, with PAIGH funding.

In conclusion, the U.S. History Commission, after the vigorous leadership of Mike Conniff, is trying to broaden its base and get more historians from the United States involved so that we may bring to fruition the above-mentioned projects and become more involved in the interdisciplinary efforts of other units of the National Section.