

**Michael Pretes, Candidate for President****University of North Alabama**

PhD, Geographical Sciences, 2006, Australian National University

MA, Political Science, 1986, Northwestern University

BA, Political Science, 1984, University of California--Berkeley

(Reprint of VP statement) I am honored to be nominated for the position of APCG President by one of my geographic heroes, Professor Jan Monk of the University of Arizona! You may be wondering why someone living outside the APCG region is a candidate for APCG Vice President. Well, I consider the APCG to be my true home AAG region: I first joined the APCG in 2003, and have regularly attended APCG meetings since 2012, also serving on the Student Awards Committee at the Chico meeting last year.

My current research focuses on tourism and national park issues in California, Oregon, and Washington, including a study of the role of California in creating the National Park Service, and the decline (or not) of youth visitors to national parks in the Pacific Northwest. In addition, I'm writing a short biography of an explorer and artist from John Wesley Powell's second Colorado River expedition in Arizona. I have also done and continue to do work on economic development policies and practices in Alaska and Yukon. I teach courses on geopolitics, public lands, historical geography, mountain and desert environments, beer and wine, North America, Latin America, Australia and Pacific Islands, Russia, and more.

I graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, later taught geography for one year at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, and was a visiting scholar at Stanford University for several years. My dissertation research, completed at the Australian National University on the other side of the Pacific, and under the supervision of Professor Katherine Gibson (J.K. Gibson-Graham), explored geography of finance practices in diverse economies of Oceania, Alaska, and Western Canada. I am a fourth-generation Californian (and a fourth-generation San Franciscan) with a family history in California and Hawai'i, my paternal great-grandparents having immigrated to those places from Spain at the turn of the twentieth century to pick sugarcane and fruit. So all of this means that even though my house is in Alabama, my real home is in the westernmost quarter of our continent, in its coastal chaparral and oak woodlands, in the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountains, and in the Sonoran, Great Basin, and Colorado deserts! I especially enjoy taking my Alabama students out to the Pacific coast, by bringing them along to APCG meetings and by leading study abroad and study away trips to various Pacific shores, including to Oregon, California, China, and Peru, as well as inland to Arizona and Idaho (it was partly for these experiential learning courses that I received AAG Distinguished Honors in Teaching in 2017).

As APCG VP, I would serve the association by working towards enhancing the visibility of geography throughout the APCG region, especially focusing on outreach to elementary and secondary schools and to organizations for working and retired people outside academia, as well as to college students. I would also work to achieve greater interaction between APCG and other AAG regional divisions, and greater involvement from our members in Alaska, Hawai'i, and Western Canada. Then we can explore potential annual meeting locations in Hilo and Whitehorse!

**Steve Graves, Candidate for Vice President****CSU, Northridge**

I have long thought the APCG an ideal organization, so I'm honored to be nominated to stand as a candidate for Vice-President. I've been involved with the APCG for many years – sometimes intensely and sometimes more casually, as my involvement with other organizations has waxed and waned. I was a co-organizer of our Palm Springs meeting, and I helped reconfigure the conference registration process a few years back, in addition to leading a field trip or two.

I have served many roles with our sister organization, the California Geographical Society (president, treasurer, web master, conference organizer, etc.), so hopefully, I can bring some measure of insight to the APCG from my experiences with the CGS.

My career interests and achievements are varied. I have published articles and chapters on pedagogy, pop music, crime, gentrification and vernacular landscapes. My primary research agenda has been for many centered on issues of access

to quality credit, and the attendant social justice issues arising from predatory lending practices. Still, I consider myself first-and-foremost a teacher. I continue to carry a heavy course load, teaching courses in both Physical and Human Geography. My free e-text for Introduction to Human Geography has grown in popularity in recent years, especially across California and neighboring states. Roughly 50 instructors have adopted it nationally.

I think I can bring both experience and energy to the APCG. I care deeply about the discipline. I'm an unapologetic acolyte, perhaps even a zealot for geography as discipline. I believe deeply in the power of our spatial epistemology and I think organizations like the APCG have an important role in promoting / defending what we collectively can achieve. However, I'm not sure we do a good job of promoting our discipline.

I don't have a long list of agenda items to promote, but I do have a couple of ideas that I would like to pursue. First, I think the APCG might serve the discipline more effectively if it would more conscientiously involve itself with pedagogy issues and outreach to K-12, especially where effective statewide organizations dedicated to such efforts are absent. Second, I think I can bring some additional energy to ongoing efforts to engage faculty and students from more colleges and universities with the APCG. I've seen first-hand the transformational effect of conference attendance on students – and I would like very much to increase the number / background of students who come home from an APCG conference energized, invigorated and inspired to pursue knowledge for reasons beyond their GPA.

**Ray Sumner, Candidate for Vice-President  
Long Beach City College**

Fellow geographers, My youth in a small place on a continent far away instilled interest in both the local environment and the distant world. Geography was a natural calling. In 1991 I left Queensland University of Technology for California, where I soon had the great pleasure of meeting Bill Bowen and the CSU Northridge geographers. So my first contact with APCG was the Northridge meeting, abruptly displaced by the famous earthquake. Joan Clemons persuaded me to become editor of "The California Geographer", and as APCG President asked me to help revise the Bylaws. When in 1996 I "settled" at Long Beach City College, I found myself promoting and practising geography at all levels - geography specialist for the "California Guide to Environmental Literacy"; workshop leader in UCLA Project ISSUES professional development program for high school science teachers; member of two CSU Long Beach Geoscience Diversity Enhancement Programs (NSF), bringing together underrepresented high school students, teachers, college instructors and university researchers; the Southern California Geographic Alliance; and work with local high-schools, environmental groups, and seniors' organizations.

Professional service to geography includes working with the Los Angeles Geographical Society, California Geographical Society; American Association of Geographers, and Institute of Australian Geographers, together with several years as Chair of the Society of Woman Geographers (Southern California Chapter). I have rarely missed an APCG meeting, contributed papers, bringing students whenever possible, served often as paper/poster/map judge, the Women's network, and chair of the Nominations Committee. Recently retired from LBCC, I maintain various academic connections, including Visiting Fellow in Geography (honorary) at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

APCG meetings have taken me to exciting new places, kept me abreast of student and faculty research, and brought many new friends. Office bearers of the Association have set an impressive record over eighty years of successful governance, stimulating activity, and student encouragement, which I would hope to maintain and advance. As a transnational geographer I am honoured to be considered for this distinguished group.

**Dydia DeLyser, Candidate for Regional Councilor  
California State University, Fullerton**

I seek the position of Regional Councilor to support the APCG region, to represent and advocate for the APCG at AAG Council, and to be involved as APCG representative in AAG activities at an important transitional time for the AAG. Below I outline my service to the APCG, and my lengthier service to the AAG. I situate this within a research career where service to community is a priority.

Though I am a native Californian and have enjoyed APCG conferences since the 1990s, I was able to become a faculty member in the APCG region only recently, having gained a position at CSU Fullerton in 2014. I ran for APCG Secretary in 2015 and was not elected. I'm a strong advocate of fieldwork in geography, and am pleased to be able to serve on the APCG's Larry Ford Scholarship Committee.

At the national level, I have been involved in AAG activities for some two decades. I currently serve on the Harassment-Free AAG Task Force, which this year unveiled a new Code of Conduct for the Association and all of its members, and introduced both an Advocate and an Ombudsperson to the recent annual meeting. I have served as Chair and Member of the AAG's Archives and Association History Committee. I have served on four Program Committees. And I have served as Co-Chair and Board Member of the Qualitative Research Specialty Group.

I'm eager to communicate information from our region to colleagues at the national level, to bring AAG-level discussions back to our region, and to serve the whole geographical community during this time of AAG Executive Director transition. The Harassment-Free AAG Taskforce's work will continue for two more years, and I look forward to working collaboratively to move this agenda positively onward.

I take service seriously. In addition to the APCG and AAG service outlined above, I serve on the Society of Women Geographers' Fellowship Committee. I served for five years as my institution's Faculty Athletics Representative ("FAR," overseeing intercollegiate athletics and reporting directly to the President/Chancellor); during that time I held elected office in both national FAR organizations. I also serve as Editor-in-Chief of *cultural geographies* and serve or have served on the Editorial Boards of ten different journals, including two AAG journals. I regularly write for non-academic audiences, I volunteer significant time in the communities where my research is based, and I currently serve as Secretary on three museum boards related to my research.

To me, service is integral to my life and to my work as a participatory historical and cultural geographer. I strive for creative ways to work with and advocate for the communities where I situate my scholarship. Becoming part of the APCG region has enabled me to link my teaching, research, service, and personal life to region and community. It would be my honor, if elected, to serve the members of the APCG, and to bring my commitment to service explicitly to the Association. I believe that jumping in is a great way to learn and I'm committed to learning more about the issues and priorities of our region and our members—I'm eager to hear and learn from you.

I'm happy to offer more information or to answer questions, and can be reached at CSU Fullerton at [dydia@fullerton.edu](mailto:dydia@fullerton.edu). I joined the faculty there as an Assistant Professor in 2014, and promoted to Associate Professor in 2018. Prior to that I spent 16 years at Louisiana State University (as Instructor, and then as Assistant and Associate Professor). I earned my MA and PhD from Syracuse University (in 1996 and 1998, respectively). But it was here in the APCG region that I was inspired to become a geographer, earning my BA in Geography at UCLA in 1992.

I thank the nominating committee, and the members of the APCG, for considering me as a candidate for this important office.

**Yolonda Youngs, Candidate for Regional Councilor  
Idaho State University**

Ph.D., Geography, 2009, Arizona State University  
M.S., 2004, Earth Sciences (Geography), Montana State University  
B.A., 1993, Anthropology, Florida State University

My first encounter with the APCG was in 2003 when I attended the annual conference in Portland, Oregon as a graduate student at Montana State University. The trip was well timed. I had recently returned to academia after nearly a decade roaming the mountains and rivers of Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Arizona and points in between as a commercial whitewater river guide. Those years gave me an informal education in the American West that formed a basis for my subsequent studies in Geography. At that 2003 APCG meeting, I presented part of my thesis research about Yellowstone National Park, attended my first Women's Network lunch, and met people that have since become dear friends and colleagues. The trip was made possible through a Women's Network travel grant and an APCG student travel grant. I

will be forever grateful for that key funding. It opened a door to the collegiality, good humor, and fine scholarship of the APCG community.

I am currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Global Studies at Idaho State University. I joined ISU in 2012 after three years as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Oklahoma State University. Although there is no Geography department at ISU, I teach a range classes and advise students in ways that support the growth of the discipline. I'm happy to be back in APCG territory! My research interests include cultural and environmental geography, tourism and sustainability, outdoor recreation, national parks and protected areas, social science GIS and geospatial technologies, visual media and culture, and regional specialties in the western United States and Europe. I earned an M.S. in Earth Sciences at Montana State University in 2004 under the steady encouragement and patient direction of Dr. William Wyckoff. My thesis focused on Yellowstone Lake's cultural landscape evolution from the 1850s to 1966. I moved onto warmer climates in the Southwest where I earned a Ph.D. in Geography from Arizona State University in 2009 through the thoughtful guidance of Dr. Daniel Arreola.

My current book project, *Framing Nature: The Making of an American Icon at the Grand Canyon* (contract with the University of Nebraska Press), traces over one hundred years of popular iconography, cultural landscape change, and environmental conservation and land management at Grand Canyon National Park. My publications include journal articles in the *Geographical Review* (twice), *Environmental History*, and *Society and Natural Resources: An International Journal*. My most recent book is *The American Environment Revisited: Environmental Historical Geographies of the U.S.* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers), published in 2018 and co-edited with Geoffrey Buckley (Ohio University). I also have published and forthcoming book chapters on the geography of hazards and risk in U.S. national parks, tourism in North America, place attachment and river guides of the Upper Snake River, and Yellowstone's cultural landscapes.

My research has been funded through grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Science Foundation, Idaho Humanities Council, the Association of American Geographers Historical Geography Specialty Group, and the APCG. In 2018 I presented a featured talk at the South Dakota University Geography Conference and in 2012, I presented the keynote lecture at Missouri State University's Geography Awareness Week. My teaching includes World Regional Geography, Cultural Geography, Geography of National Parks and World Heritage Sites, Environment and Geography, Conservation of Natural Resources, Geography of Outdoor Recreation. I have received awards from the International Geographical Union, the U.S. National Committee to the International Cartographic Association, and the NSF IGERT (Integrative Graduate Education and Teaching) program. I have organized sessions and presented numerous papers and posters at APCG, AAG, and other national and international conferences. I am a manuscripts reviewer for the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *Journal of Historical Geography*, *Journal of Cultural Geography*, *Historical Geography*, *Geographical Review*, and Oxford University Press.

The APCG holds a special place in my heart and professional life. It has been and continues to be a vital part of my growth as a scholar, educator, and professional geographer. I have been a member of APCG since 2003 (minus a few years while in Oklahoma). During that time, I have regularly presented papers and posters and organized paper sessions at the annual conference and, in 2005, I organized and led an APCG fieldtrip on the Salt River in Phoenix (drawing on my past life as a river guide). As a graduate student, I was honored to receive the Lary Ford Fieldwork Award in Cultural Geography (2006) that supported my research by foot, mule, and boat in Grand Canyon National Park. I am also deeply grateful for multiple years of successful APCG Women's Network Travel Grants and APCG Student Travel Grants that provided vital help to attend and present at APCG annual conferences through my graduate years.

Now, as a faculty member in the region, I am committed to giving back to the organization and helping it grow. I have served as the APCG Secretary from 2015 to 2019. As Secretary, I recorded the annual meeting notes for *Pacifica* and fulfilled other basic reporting tasks of this position. But I also worked diligently and closely with the APCG Executive Council to make the duties and logistics of running APCG more transparent to our members. This includes creating new documents for the APCG website such as the duties of the Secretary, an annual calendar of APCG tasks by committee or elected position, and how to organize an APCG meeting. I also helped to facilitate communication between the Executive Council and various committee members and conference hosts through email exchanges and new documents (e.g. Banquet Duties for the Hosting the Annual Conference, posted to the APCG website). I also served on the APCG Distinguished Service Committee (2018 - 2019) and the APCG Membership Committee (2015 - 2018).

I look forward to this election and the opportunity to serve as the AAG Regional Councillor. My years of APCG activity and service represent my sustained commitment to the organization and provide me with a sense of the needs and opportunities for APCG students, faculty, and departments. If elected, I will dedicate my efforts to represent the interests and activities of APCG to AAG and provide timely updates of activities and actions between our regional APCG and national AAG communities.

**Kris Bezdecny, Candidate for Secretary**  
**CSU, Los Angeles**

Thank you for the opportunity to run for Secretary. I am relatively new to the APCG community. I began as an assistant professor at Cal State LA in Fall 2015, and attended my first APCG meeting in 2016. I have attended every meeting since then, and have strongly encouraged my students to attend as well: as paper presenters, as poster presenters, and to attend the conference and learn more about the greater geographical community.

Being secretary of the APCG would be an honor, to provide an opportunity for me to give back to a community that, in my short time here, has provided so many opportunities for me and, more importantly, my students. For me, APCG is an incubator for the future of geography. For many of our students and ourselves, our first conferences were regional conferences. APCG is also a very supportive environment for the diversity of the student body of our member states, providing several opportunities for scholarships and travel grants to further encourage more participation in geographic research and scholarship. Many of my students were only able to attend APCG as a result of the financial support of APCG – which then allowed them to experience the collegial support that APCG has always provided for them during each conference, welcomed as members of the community.

I received my PhD from University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida. I am a qualitative theoretical urban geographer; my research is focused on uneven geographical development in urban spaces, with a particular focus on rights to the city. I currently mentor 9 graduate students and 14 undergraduate students in geographic research. I also value service for the discipline: I currently serve as Treasurer of the Los Angeles Geographical Society, and as board member of the Qualitative Research Specialty Group of the AAG.

As Secretary, I will commit to work with APCG leadership to continue to actively recruit greater participation in the APCG, and continue to commit to encouraging greater inclusion of our students, who represent the future of our discipline.

**Elizabeth Ridder, Candidate for Secretary**  
**CSU, San Marcos**

PhD, Geography, 2013, Arizona State University  
MA, Geography, 2008, Arizona State University  
BS, Biology, 2002, Arizona State University

As a newer member of APCG, I value the nomination for the position of secretary. I attended my first APCG annual meeting in Chico, CA, after my 2016 appointment to Assistant Professor at California State University San Marcos. I am a biogeographer with research and teaching interests that include the influence of climate on vegetation; human use and transformations to landscapes; and human-related impacts to wildlife at the suburban fringes. I currently teach courses in physical geography, climate change, GIS, and parks and protected areas. Currently, CSUSM's geography offerings support degree pathways in many other programs on campus and the Geography minor, but we are in the midst of the review process for a Geography major.

At CSUSM, I seek out opportunities to align my teaching, research, and service activities. As one example of this alignment, I serve as co-Chair for the Global Commitment Committee, which promotes global awareness, multicultural understanding, and global citizenship through a film series/discussion panel, as well as a newly developed, non-credit certificate program. I am also a member of the Environmental Studies Steering Committee, helping to shape the curriculum for the Environmental Studies major. More importantly, I serve my department, college, campus, and the discipline of geography through geography curriculum and program development. I strongly encourage fieldwork, within

and outside of my classes. I have convinced 12 biology and environmental studies majors to voluntarily monitor and map vegetation communities and wildlife at my local field sites – even during snake season. I'm pretty sure they would all be geography majors if they had the option. I welcome the opportunity to support, and to continue the recent work of the APCG in engaging undergraduate scholars and encouraging historically underrepresented groups in geography to participate in the discipline.