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## **Association for Gravestone Studies e-Newsletter**

**Issue #78**  
**October 2009**

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### **AGS Membership**

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We invite everyone with an interest in gravestones and cemeteries to join the AGS.

Membership benefits include:

- The AGS *Quarterly*: Bulletin of the Association for Gravestone Studies
- The next published issue of *Markers*
- The AGS monthly *e-Newsletter*
- Discounts on AGS publications
- Access to the AGS Research Clearing House and Lending Library
- Discounts on AGS conferences

To join, renew, or for more information, visit [www.gravestonestudies.org/join.htm](http://www.gravestonestudies.org/join.htm).

### **Earn a Free Membership!**

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Any member of the AGS who brings in five new members at the Senior level or above within a 12-month period will be given a free membership renewal at the Individual level for one year (free year begins with your next renewal date). New members that you recruit must record your name in brackets, after theirs, on the membership application form.

**2010 AGS Conference and Annual Meeting**

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2010 AGS Conference and Annual Meeting  
June 22-27, 2010 in Granville, Ohio

Updates will be posted on the AGS website,  
in the e-Newsletter and the Quarterly as they develop.

We hope to see you there!



**Our 2010 Conference Logo**  
from the gravestone of Mr. Byron Hayes who died March 6, 1836.  
It is located in Granville's Old Colony Burying Ground, established in 1805.

**Call for Papers and Participation Sessions**

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Call for Papers and Participation Sessions  
2010 AGS Conference and Annual Meeting

Proposals are solicited for scholarly papers, 20 minutes in length, to be presented during the evening lecture sessions. Please send your proposal and 250-word abstract by February 1, 2010 to: Program Chair: Dr. Ian Brown, [ibrown@bama.ua.edu](mailto:ibrown@bama.ua.edu).

Proposals are solicited for Participation Sessions, 50 minutes in length, to be presented Thursday June 24 and Friday June 25. Please send your proposal and a 250-word abstract by February 1, 2010 to: Participation Sessions Co-Chairs, Robert Keeler and Judy Juntunen, [robertk@clackamas.edu](mailto:robertk@clackamas.edu), or Robert Keeler, 3005 S.W. Westwood Dr., Portland, OR, 97225.

**Student Scholarship Announcement**

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A scholarship is being offered for a student to attend and participate in the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Association for Gravestone Studies to be held at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, June 22-27, 2010. The scholarship will cover registration, room and board for the full conference. There will also be a cash prize of \$200, which will be presented at the conference. The recipient of this scholarship is expected to present a

scholarly paper, twenty minutes in length, during the Friday evening lecture session.

Requirements: The applicant must be a graduate or undergraduate student at an accredited college or university, as well as a member of the AGS.

Application: The application will consist of the title, abstract and text for a twenty-minute paper presentation. The presentation should be in the exact form that will be delivered at the conference, including visuals. Powerpoint is the preferred medium.

Deadline: By April 1, 2010, submissions should be sent as a PDF attachment to an email, a CD, or a hard copy to [ibrown@bama.ua.edu](mailto:ibrown@bama.ua.edu) or Ian W. Brown, Box 870210, Department of Anthropology, The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0210.

**Call for Nominations: Forbes Award and Oakley Certificate**

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We are seeking candidates for Oakley Certificates and the Forbes Award. The deadline for nominations is December 31, 2009.

**The Oakley Certificate of Merit**

The Oakley Certificate of Merit is presented periodically by the AGS Board of Trustees to individuals and groups that have helped to advance the mission of the Association. The award consists of a certificate, presented by the Board of Trustees, as well as the gift of a book to the honoree's local library, in his or her name on behalf of AGS. Whenever possible the award presentation will be made by a local AGS member. Each year's recipients will have their names printed in the conference program book and annual report. In addition they will be acknowledged at the Awards Reception at the annual conference.

**The AGS Harriette Merrifield Forbes Award**

The Forbes Award is presented annually by the AGS Board of Trustees to honor an individual, institution, or organization in recognition of exceptional service to the field of gravestone studies. The Forbes Award is the highest honor bestowed by the AGS. The presentation is usually made at the Awards Banquet during the Annual Conference. A reception precedes the banquet, at which the recipient is the guest of honor. The President makes a presentation speech indicating why the person or organization was chosen and summarizing the work accomplished. A framed certificate is presented along with a photograph of Harriette Merrifield Forbes. The recipient usually gives an acceptance speech.

For more information and nomination forms, please visit [The AGS Awards page](#).

**AGS Quarterly Conservation Column**

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The AGS Conservation Committee would like to thank Mike Trinkley for stepping up and re-creating the Conservation Column. We've received comments from a number of AGS Members saying that they appreciate this addition to the *Quarterly*.

The Committee encourages others to submit their articles for consideration. Please forward your submissions to [info@gravestonestudies.org](mailto:info@gravestonestudies.org).

**Back issues of *Markers* available online**

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As part of AGS's partnership with the University of Massachusetts, Amherst to house the AGS Archives, the University has digitized all back issues of *Markers* and made them available online. Here is the link:

<http://www.library.umass.edu/spcoll/umarmot/?p=991>

**New Hampshire AGS Meeting**

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AGS Trustee Joshua Segal will be holding an AGS meeting in New Hampshire on Sunday, November 15, 2PM, at Congregation Betenu, 5 Northern Blvd., Amherst, NH (directions provided below).

All are welcome to attend!

Program:

- 2:00 to 2:15: Arrive and mingle.
- 2:15 to 2:30: What is AGS? An overview - Joshua Segal
- 2:30 to 3:00: Using the Graveyard as a Genealogical Tool - Neil Jenness
- 3:00 to 3:30: The rhetoric of the cemetery - Liz Wright
- 3:30 to 4:30: Conservation/preservation - Kai Nalenz
- 4:30 to 5:00: Mingle and munchies

Directions to Betenu: take Route 101A (Amherst St) west from Route 3, Nashua and Merrimack, or east from Milford to Northern Blvd, which is between the Wal-Mart and the Mobil gas station. Turn south on Northern Blvd. Cross the railroad track, and take the first right, which is the parking lot for the Northwood Green office complex. Betenu is the first building on the left.

**New Publication: *For an Eternal Memory: Ordinary and Unusual Jewish Cemetery Monuments and How to Create Them***

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*For an Eternal Memory: Ordinary and Unusual Jewish Cemetery Monuments and How to Create Them* is a new book by AGS Trustee Joshua L. Segal. Book Description: The author, Rabbi Joshua Segal of Congregation Betenu, Amherst, NH, says, "In the grand scheme of existence, we will spend a lot more time underground than above the ground and yet, very few people give much thought to what their tombstone will look like and what will be inscribed on it." The book provides a step-by-step procedure by which to select everything from the material of which the monument is made to the artwork and epitaph on it. In showing what is appropriate, Rabbi Segal shows many examples of monuments that many might consider inappropriate! Some are quite humorous!

The book is \$19.95. To order, visit <http://cemeteryjewish.com/>.

A review will appear in an upcoming issue of the *Quarterly*.

**AGS Member wins contest**

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Congratulations to AGS Member Janet Seapker for her winning submission to the *Waterhouse Symbolism* newsletter in the contest for finding the most unusual Jewish gravestone in the United States. It is Arthur Bluethenthal's marker in Hebrew Cemetery, a section of Oakdale Cemetery, in Wilmington, North Carolina.

To see the marker and to learn more about it, please see the August 2009 issue of [\*Waterhouse Symbolism\*](#).

**AGS Member Blog: Kimberly Sawtelle**

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This month, we are featuring Kimberly Sawtelle's blog. She writes: "I've written my first article on Civil War gravestones in central Maine and wanted to send along the URL in case other members may have interest. Lots of pics!"

<http://onagravesubject.blogspot.com/>

**AGS Member Online Databases: Ellis Michaels**

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Ellis writes: "I have a couple of databases of tombstone photos if you are interested in publicizing them. I contribute photos and help to manage them for the Pennsylvania USGenWeb Archives Project. Three of our larger projects are:

For Allegheny County PA <http://www.usgwarchives.net/pa/allegheny/tsphotos.htm>

For Somerset County PA <http://www.usgwarchives.net/pa/somerset/tombstone.html>

For Westmoreland County PA  
<http://www.usgwarchives.net/pa/westmoreland/tsimages.htm>

Ellis Michaels  
PAGenWeb  
[ellisrn@earthlink.net](mailto:ellisrn@earthlink.net)."

**AGS Member Karin Sprague Interviewed on Public Radio**

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AGS Member and gravestone carver Karin Sprague was interviewed on WICN. She talked about how she became a stone carver, the challenges of carving slate and her deeply compassionate process of arriving at a design for headstone.

To listen: <http://wicn.org/audio/inquiry-karin-sprague>

Karin's website: [www.karinsprague.com](http://www.karinsprague.com)

### **Slave Burial Database Project**

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The Slave Burial Database Project is a student project under the guidance of the African American Studies department of Fordham University at Lincoln Center, New York.

It seeks to create a database for burial grounds and cemeteries of enslaved African Americans within the United States.

Although the project has many important goals, its initial phase will consist only of collecting information on burial sites for a functional database. This will serve to document these sacred grounds by location, type (slave cemetery, plantation cemetery, etc.) and other pertinent information and will also provide a service to scholars, historians and institutions in their research and study of this aspect of American history.

Long term goals include encouragement of local preservation, continued study and research, and legislation supporting their protection and oversight.

For more information, or to obtain an entry form to submit a burial ground or cemetery, please contact Sandra Arnold at [arnold@fordham.edu](mailto:arnold@fordham.edu).

### **Exhibit: Foil Impressions, Worcester, Massachusetts**

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Judi Trainor, AGS treasurer and workshop instructor, is having an exhibit of foil impressions in the Class of '41 Gallery at the Gordon Library, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, MA. On display are about 70 of her framed impressions. Some were done at past AGS conferences. The exhibit is running until December 18. Judi will again be offering a class in creating foil impressions at the upcoming Ohio AGS conference.

<http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/Library/About/calendar.html>



### **Lecture Series: Gravestones and Cemeteries, Ottawa, Canada**

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The autumn public lecture series at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, this year is on the theme Gravestones and Cemeteries. The first lecture (held October 23rd) was preceded by the presentation of the first Beechwood Cemetery Essay Prize by Mrs Grete Hale, Chair of the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation, to a student from last year's Carleton University seminar course on gravestones and cemeteries.

The full program is as follows:

October 23: Bruce Elliott (Carleton University) (AGS Member) *Memorializing the Civil War Dead: Modernity and corruption under the Grant administration.*

November 6: Harold Mytum (University of Liverpool) *Gravestones and identity in the Ulster diaspora.*

November 13: Richard Garvin (UBC Okanagan) *Memorialization and Indigenous identity: Colonial encounters on the Northwest Coast.*

November 20: Caroline Janney (Purdue University) *Remembering the Confederacy: Ladies Memorial Associations & the politics of memory in the American South.*

December 4: John Belshaw (North Island College) and Diane Purvey (Thompson Rivers University, BC) *Road Warriors and Teen Angels: Deathscapes of youth in British Columbia.*

A photo exhibit from last year's Carleton University seminar course on Gravestones and Cemeteries continues on view at Beechwood's National Memorial Centre, in the glass cabinets in the rear hall, Mon.-Fri. 8-5, and Sat. 8-noon.

To view a leaflet with additional details [please click here](#).

To view descriptions of the lectures, [please click here](#).

Directions and further information may be found on [www.carleton.ca/history/events/shannon.html](http://www.carleton.ca/history/events/shannon.html).

**Events: Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver, British Columbia**

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Historic Mountain View Cemetery in Vancouver has made a concerted effort to invite the residents of the neighbouring community inside, to make use of it as a shared space, and encourage a protective sense of ownership. Among other things, it has appointed Victoria-based artist Paula Jardine "Artist in Residence." For the past five years she has organized the All Souls commemoration and related community events there.

To learn more about Mountain View Cemetery and upcoming events, please visit: [www.vancouver.ca/allsouls](http://www.vancouver.ca/allsouls).

**Book Party: Forest Hills Cemetery, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts**

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Book Party for Anthony Sammarco's "Forest Hills Cemetery" Sunday, November 15 at 4pm, at Forest Hills Cemetery, 95 Forest Hills Ave., Jamaica Plain, MA. Co-sponsored by the Jamaica Plain Historical Society.

Sammarco is the author of more than 50 books on local history and he unveils his latest title for Images of America: *Forest Hills Cemetery*. Crammed with historic photographs, this "Who's Who" of Victorian Boston introduces you to the financiers, industrialists, artists, radicals and revolutionaries buried in Boston's premier cemetery. Find out "who's in the book" and have your own copy signed.

This event is \$15, or \$10 for Forest Hills Cemetery Trust members.

The latest entries for Forest Hill Cemetery Trust's blog come from Sammarco, who has been writing about many of the figures featured in his new book. Check out Anthony's entries, as well as ones by many others, at [www.foresthillstrust.blogspot.com](http://www.foresthillstrust.blogspot.com).

**Other upcoming events:**

Sunday, November 1 at 2pm: Victorian Spiritualism Tour

Monday, November 2 at 4-6pm: Day of the Dead

<http://www.foresthillstrust.org/>

**Article: Preserving history at Sag Harbor's Old Burying Ground**

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This article is linked to [27east.com](http://27east.com). It is about the the Old Burying Ground in Sag Harbor, Long Island and the Sag Harbor Old Burying Ground Committee's efforts to preserve it.

For information on the the Sag Harbor Old Burying Ground Committee:

Sag Harbor Historical Society  
174 Main Street  
Sag Harbor, NY 11963  
(631) 725-5092  
<http://www.sagharborhistoricalsociety.org/>

Contact: Dorothy Ingersoll Zaykowski. She is the principal author of the book *The Old Burying Ground at Sag Harbor, Long Island, New York*. For more information, visit [www.HeritageBooks.com](http://www.HeritageBooks.com).

**Article: Cemetery solves old mystery for family**

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This article, posted on [clarionledger.com](http://clarionledger.com), is about the discovery of William Warren Williamson's gravestone in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

**Radio Broadcast: New Japanese Cemetery: 'Graveyard in the Sky'**

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Traditional burial plots in Tokyo cost tens of thousands of dollars, so some people are turning to a new form of cemetery. The BBC's Roland Buerk calls it a graveyard in the sky. It's a building where the ashes of the dead are stored, instead of being buried underground.

To listen to this story, visit: <http://www.hereandnow.org/2009/10/rundown-108/> (the link is the third story on the page).

**Article: Famous family's memorial uncovered in Kittery (Maine)**

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This article, posted on [www.seacostonline.com](http://www.seacostonline.com), is about a memorial stone and tomb in Kittery, Maine that was obscured by trees for the last 30 years. It was recently unveiled and restored to its former glory by a group of citizen volunteers. The dedication will be November 7th.

**Article: *Tombstone tours: Famous cemeteries***

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This article, linked to [msnbc.com](http://msnbc.com), is about cemeteries to visit in in Boston, New York, Indianapolis, Cleveland, New Orleans, Los Angeles and Paris.

AGS Trustee Janet Heywood is quoted in the article.

**Website: [preservationdirectory.com](http://preservationdirectory.com)**

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[Preservationdirectory.com](http://Preservationdirectory.com) is an online resource for historic preservation, building restoration and cultural resource management in the United States and Canada.

On the site, you can learn about upcoming events, conferences, and trade shows in the wide field of historic and cultural resource preservation.

[They also have a page with lists of preservation businesses](#), including monument, sculpture and gravestone restoration.

**Website: Louisiana Cemeteries**

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[www.la-cemeteries.com](http://www.la-cemeteries.com) is a resource that has information about more than 6,300 cemeteries in Louisiana. Cemeteries are listed by parish, and for many there are detailed lists and photos. There are also articles about the cemeteries and those who are interred in them.

Some photos on the site have been contributed by AGS Members.

**Query: Grants for Cemetery Cleanup**

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Are any AGS members aware of grants available for tree cleanup and removal? This is for a cemetery in Haverhill, Massachusetts. Please email [jtladd1@juno.com](mailto:jtladd1@juno.com). Thank you.

**Queries: Epitaph, Sears Catalog**

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AGS Member Sue Lorraine sent in these two questions:

"Does anyone know the ending to this epitaph? I think it is just one long line more. It is a 1791 death date - our county's earliest death date on a tombstone. It mentions slavery. Elijah Webster age 36. The stone is in Grandview Cemetery in Whitesboro, New York.

O cruel unexpected death  
To take my body from this (earth?)  
Come rich or poor, come  
Bond & free,  
????????????????????

Also, does anyone have a copy of the Sears Tombstone and Monuments catalog? Or the Sears treestump catalog? If so, could you write something about it? Share some photos of it? Sell it?

Sue Lorraine of Utica, NY. [slorraine1@roadrunner.com](mailto:slorraine1@roadrunner.com)."

**Query: Busiest Time of Year at Cemeteries**

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Dr. Terri Modesto of TEAR Center (<http://www.tearcenter.com/TEAR-Center-History.html>) is looking for any studies that have been done (local or national) to determine which day of the year is the busiest at cemeteries. Her contact info is [tmodesto@tearcenter.com](mailto:tmodesto@tearcenter.com).

**Query: Cemetery Software**

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This query comes from Mike Pavey. He writes:

"I am a trustee at an old cemetery and an AGS member. My cemetery contains burials at least back to the mid-1800's. It is still actively used as a cemetery today. All of the cemetery records are in an old plat book. It lists who owns which lots and who is buried in each grave. If something happens to this book, all of the information will be lost.

Can anyone recommend software that would help us organize and save this data? We would eventually like to enter the name and dates for each person buried in the cemetery, as well as a photo of each gravestone. It would also be important to be able to put this information on the web or in some place where it will be safely stored. Please contact me at: [mikepavey@yahoo.com](mailto:mikepavey@yahoo.com)."

**Note from the AGS office:** Here are some databases that we know of. Has anyone had any experience with these? Please let us know.

[Advantage Design Services](#)

[PastPerfect Software](#)

[Custom Data Systems](#)

[AskSam.com](#)

[Cemetery Management Software](#)

[Cem-Editor Cemetery Transcription Software](#)

[Pontem Software](#)

[The Crypt Keeper Software](#)

[Web Cemeteries](#)

## **The AGS President's Bully Pulpit**

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### **The AGS Conference is an Incredible Bargain**

Why does it cost so much to attend our annual conference?

For some reason I find I am hearing this question far more frequently now that I'm President. The question is certainly legitimate, especially in today's economy when we should be doing everything we can to keep costs down. Last year's registration fee of \$525 (for the full package) might seem rather intimidating, especially if one had to travel a distance just to get to the conference, but looks can be deceiving. If you only knew the efforts that conference chairs go to keeping costs this low I guarantee you would be amazed.

Words are cheap, however, so I offer here a comparison. There are two conferences that I always go to each year because to me they are the best of the best: the AGS (naturally) and the Southeastern Archaeological Conference (SEAC). I was President of the latter organization in the early 1990s and was Program Chair for a conference that we held in Birmingham, Alabama, in the mid 90s. I know all that we did then to keep costs down and I imagine the SEAC board does the same now, but it is a rather thankless task. SEAC is an especially good point of comparison for the AGS because their conference starts on a Wednesday and everyone leaves by Sunday. For last year at Schenectady the AGS officially began formal activities on Tuesday, so one would expect the SEAC conference to be considerably cheaper than AGS. Let's compare the two to see if this is true.

Our registration for the full conference package in 2009 was \$525, whereas SEAC's registration for the upcoming meeting in Mobile (Nov. 4-7) is \$65 for members and \$75 for non-members, providing they have paid by October 12. What a reasonable conference rate!

Ah, but there's more to the formula. Let's look at lodgings as a point of comparison. AGS provides living quarters in college dorms while SEAC offers hotels. Given my druthers, I'd rather stay in a hotel. We all know college dorms are not the fanciest of accommodations, but having said that I must admit the beds are pretty comfortable, bathrooms are either in the rooms or nearby, and there is always free linen. Well, it's not really free. Unbeknownst to all of you, conference chairs often spend sleepless nights worrying about whether attendees will have pillows, pillow cases, sheets, and towels that are larger than a napkin. Members don't know about such things, because

linen after all is included under your \$525 fee.

So where are SEAC members to stay for the upcoming conference? The Renaissance Riverview Hotel in Mobile sounds very nice, and I hear there are even spectacular views of the bay. As I scroll down the web site I see that the standard room rate is \$124 plus tax (14%) or I can have a Bayview Parlor room for \$189+. Because I'm trying to cut costs, I think will go ahead and face the land. Figuring in the tax comes to \$141 a night, so if I multiply that by four I'm going to have to dish out \$564 for lodging at this year's SEAC meeting. I hadn't really expected accommodations to be so high, but because I didn't have to worry about it when I registered it wasn't an issue. Now, however, I'm starting to sweat a little.

Thankfully, the SEAC meeting this year is in Alabama so I'll go ahead and drive to it. That would normally save me lots, but I see on the web site that there is a daily parking charge at the hotel of \$12. If I use the valet service it will cost me \$16 per day. I drive a Toyota Yaris-I'll park it myself. But that's still \$48 for the duration and I really wasn't counting on spending that much for leaving my car in a parking lot. Where's a college campus when you need one?

Okay, what next? I guess I'll need to eat. How much did that cost me at the AGS conference last June? Once again, that was included in the \$525 registration fee, and if I remember correctly the food was pretty good. What about at SEAC? I'm on my own for food there it seems. I suspect dining is going to be pretty expensive in a hotel, so maybe I'll just skip breakfast this year. If I do that I'm going to have to have a hearty lunch though. I'm not sure \$10 will do it, but let me budget it at that. Dinner for \$25 might actually be an underestimate for a city of this size, but if I don't drink a thing, I believe I can manage my nutritional intake at \$35 per day for four days-\$140. Because I haven't actually consumed the food yet, or dished out the money to handle it, I really wasn't all that worried when I sent in my \$65 registration a couple of months ago.

So where am I presently in the world of high finances? The way I figure it, the upcoming SEAC meeting is going to cost me \$65 for registration + \$564 for lodging (I think I might ask for several rollaways if they don't cost extra) + \$48 for parking (maybe I could just park on the street? Right!) + \$140 for food (sure wish I had breakfast for that amount). That brings me up to \$817!

For that kind of money there must be tons of workshops, participation sessions, evening lectures, banquets, and maybe even a bus tour or two. Nope. There are thirty-four competing paper/poster sessions with each paper presentation session comprised of ten twenty-minute orations. There are eight sessions going on at any one time, which means I'm going to have to do a lot of hopping about from room to room. When am I actually going to get to meet people? I note that there is a first night reception at The Exploreum, which is free, and there is also a free dance, but I don't dance so that's out. On Saturday there's an excursion to the U.S.S. Alabama followed by a seafood dinner, but as I haven't budgeted those extra costs into the \$817, I think I'll have to pass.

Does everyone get the picture by now? Conferences are not cheap and they never will be, but for some conferences you get a lot more bang for the buck. I compared AGS conference costs to SEAC because these are the two conferences that I know very well. And I also know that the trustees of both SEAC and AGS make valiant efforts to keep costs down for their members. For AGS members our conference fees seem high because we have to pay it all at once. This is not the case if one is using a credit card (I'm not promoting such things, necessarily!), but it has the appearance of being expensive because of the timing. The reason why AGS needs your money upfront is so

that we can pay the colleges before the conference actually begins. That way the colleges know for sure that our event is definitely going to happen. By structuring payment in this manner we are able to keep costs down significantly. If we were only talking about a few dollars here, I would have saved my Bully Pulpit breath, but AGS really does save its conference-goers hundreds of dollars each and every year. Not only that, but we all get one heck of a conference in the bargain, so come join us in Ohio!

--Ian W. Brown

**Contact Information**

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phone: 413-772-0836

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