Geographic Chronicles
Professor Reg Golledge and the Millennium Project Interview

In Volume XXXVIII, 1998, we published an account of the Millennium Project on Australian Geography and Geographers. This project was developed and led by Elaine Stratford, University of Tasmania.

As part of the Project, prominent geographers were interviewed on audiotape, following a standard set of questions, which are printed in italics in the Golledge interview. Australian English spelling has also been retained.

Ray Sumner volunteered to do the interview with Reg Golledge, who generously agreed that an abridged version of his interview could be published in the California Geographer. Although the interview took place in 1999, publication was held over because of the nature of the California Geographer 2000.

Australian Millennium Project participants were:

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Interview with Professor Reginald Golledge
October 26, 1999 – Santa Barbara

RS: **What in general influenced your interest in geography?**

RG: I think I’ve probably always been a geographer right from my earliest years. My father worked on the NSW Government railways and we moved around quite a lot. I was born in the small town of Dungog in the Hunter Valley. We moved from there to Katoomba and then Lithgow, then out to the Murray River to a little place called Tocumwal, then down to the Riverina to Cootamundra, then to a small farm and a little hamlet called Yarra outside of Norwood, before moving to Newcastle and my movement to the University of New England.

So, we moved around a fair bit, primarily in small towns and in the countryside and you got to appreciate from an early time on the substantial differences between one part of the country and the other. I enjoyed learning about those differences because when you live in the country you have to not only learn about them but you have to learn how to use them and to recognise them as part of your survival.

RS: So you went to school in a lot of these little country towns in NSW?

RG: Right, yes, and in every one of them, probably my best subject was geography.

RS: Good. Any teachers that stand out in any place?

RG: In my high school I had a teacher by the name of Quinlan who was a bit flamboyant at times in terms of how he presented material, but he presented the curriculum material in such a way that I enjoyed it and went well beyond it. And that helped to, interest me in geography. Actually, my two Honours subjects at high school were history and geography and I actually did much better at history. I did a first class Honours in history and only a second class in geography on the leaving certificate.

RS: So, was it in Newcastle that you did your leaving?

RG: No, it was in Goulburn.

RS: **Now, the second part of question one says, what shaped the trajectory of your career and interests?** Perhaps, the moving around, or when you got to university?
RG: I think probably in high school and at university. At university probably the most influential thing were the faculty that were at the University of New England at that time and the tremendous, not just support, but the stimulation that I obtained in many of the geography courses as opposed to the other courses that I did at that university.

I think also personalities, I really enjoyed the leadership of Ellis Thorpe at New England at that particular time and became a good friend of his even as an undergraduate and continued through into my graduate work. He did convince me that I should be a geography major and not a history major for example, and concentrated my efforts more in the geography area than elsewhere. He was instrumental in talking me into enrolling in the Honours courses, and staying on for a BA Honours degree and was also very influential in suggesting that I stay for the Masters, the new Masters program that they were just building at New England instead of going off and being a high school teacher somewhere.

RS: Compared with the American experience, I'm assuming you enjoyed really small classes?

RG: Yes, very much so. In my freshman year, in my first year at the University of New England, there were 81 people. There were only 240 students in the entire university and there were about 180 faculty members. So it was very intensive, small tutorial work. The largest classes were about 50-60 people and they were the introductory, stage one classes. But the closeness, the close relationship that you developed with your professors, with your teachers and lecturers at that stage, was very important.

RS: And on a practical note, did you have a Commonwealth scholarship or whatever was the equivalent, that enabled you to go to university?

RG: I was awarded both a Commonwealth scholarship and a teacher scholarship and at that time I had no career expectations apart from being a teacher so I turned down the Commonwealth scholarship and accepted the teacher scholarship, and that's what paid my way through university.

I learned much later on that I should not have done that, particularly when I eventually got to New Zealand for my first job and the Department of Education called in my bond.

RS: Which geographers or other figures outside the discipline have most influenced your work and why?
RG: Yes. There are several phases that I'd have to identify where different people have influenced my work at different stages of my life. I mentioned Ellis Thorpe. Other people like Eric Wilmington, John Holmes, Ted Chapman at the University of New England, all had a very important influence on my undergraduate and my first couple of graduate experiences.

In New Zealand I was really fortunate in being offered a job at the University of Canterbury which I took up in 1961, and other people who were appointed at that time included Les King, John Rainer and William Clarke – Bill Clarke – who was just finishing his Masters at Canterbury, so we developed a cadre of four “young Turks” who stimulated the Canterbury department quite a lot, particularly with Les King leading us and bringing back the quantitative methods and theoretical revolution-type things that he had experienced for his Ph.D. program at the University of Iowa.

RS: Did you have your Ph.D. then or you'd just finished your Masters?

RG: No, I went to New Zealand just after I'd finished my Masters. In fact, while I was over there a Fulbright visitor to the department was Harold McCarty who was then Chair of the University of Iowa, where Les King previously got his Ph.D. McCarty and I taught a couple of courses and he started suggesting that I should go to the States for a Ph.D. because with the faculty Ph.D. I was doing at Canterbury at that time, the normal time for a faculty member to finish a Ph.D. was about eight years at that stage. So he was the next most significant influence. He obtained a University Fellowship and attracted me to Iowa where I did my Ph.D. At Iowa he had a significant influence but at that time there was a very interesting group of new graduate students, Jerry (Gerard) Rushton was there and he and I got to start working together right from an early stage. Doug Amadeo and I wrote a number of papers as graduate students together and John Hudson, among others, these were three names that have gone on to significant prominence in the discipline. We all interacted a lot and really that's the place where most of the initial work on behavioural geography came out of those interactions.

RS: So once you came to America you more or less stayed?

RG: Yes. When I finished my Ph.D. I went to British Columbia, the University of British Columbia but I had every intention, when I finished my Ph.D., of going back to Australia or New Zealand; but I wrote to every department in Australia and New Zealand looking for a job and only one department Chair responded to me and that was George
Dury in Sydney who said he had a part time job marking final exam papers if I wanted to pay my own way back. But no-one else even bothered to respond to me which meant that, career-wise, I had to look towards North America for employment possibilities.

But I enjoyed the year at the British Columbia and met some very important people there, also young Assistant Professors who, like me, were just starting out, developing new areas like David Ward and Julian Minghi and Mark Melton in the physical area and so on.

And then the next step was to go to Ohio State University. Les King had finished up there after going back to North America to McGill University and he managed to get the department Chair, then [Edward] Taafe, to appoint both John Rayner and myself so the three of us got back together again, after first starting off in New Zealand. And King has had a significant impact on my whole life as a geographer. It was he who really formalised my interest in quantitative methods and geographic theory at Canterbury. He and John and I learned how to program and use computers when the first computers came on board at Canterbury.

RS: Back in Fortran days?

RG: Oh it was pre-Fortran. Learning machine languages. At the Ohio State University also, there was another very exciting young group there, Emilio Casetti and Rayner and King or course and Larry Brown and Kevin Cox, George Demko and (Howard) Gauthier and other people. It was just an extraordinarily stimulating environment.

RS: There must have been a lot of interaction within the department too then?

RG: Yes, there was quite a lot. Students we met up with and befriended and taught were excellent people like Yorgo Pappageorgiou and John Oldand, David Cowen, amongst many many others. In 1970 I took leave without pay and came back to the University of Sydney for a year, sort of the equivalent of a sabbatical except that the Ohio State didn't have sabbaticals so I had to take the leave without pay. [David] Simonett was the Chair at Sydney at that time and I had met him a number of times before but this was an opportunity to learn a lot about him. We became very good friends. I think we worked very hard, he worked me very hard, both in terms of teaching but also in getting the first computers into the geography department at the University of Sydney. I remember one day he came in and said take the University vehicle and go over to Crow's Nest and pick up these boxes. I picked them up and brought them back and I said what do you want me to do
with them, and he said they’re Hewlett Packard computers, put them together and get them working.

RS: And you did it?

RG: Well, we got them together and he said, “Okay now for the next couple of weeks I want you to teach the geography faculty here how to use them and while you’re at it, give them some courses in mathematics and statistics.” So a whole stack of the department there, including myself, were all ready to take off for the December break and he hauled us all back in and we all had to sit around learning about computer and some fundamental math and statistic stuff.

RS: And start teaching as soon as the year started in February or March.

RG: Anyway, then he was appointed as Chair here in Santa Barbara and he and I were the actual final two candidates for the Chair position. They selected him, which I’m very thankful for. He started this department off and invited me to come out here with him in 1977. From then up until the time of his death from cancer in 1990, we were close friends, worked very closely to help build this department into one of the better ranking departments in the world. So at this end there’s been Simonett and Terry Smith and Waldo Tobler in particular that have had significant impacts on my life and interests and research areas in the profession.

RS: There is a second part to that question, about other figures outside the discipline, some non-geographers who might have had an influence on your work and why?

RG: I’ve been a very inward looking person as far as that’s concerned. There are a limited number of people outside the discipline who have had significant influence on my work. One was Gustav Bergman the philosopher, a logical positivist; from him I took courses at the University of Iowa and he really introduced me to the positivist way of thinking. I’d say, particularly during the 60s and the period in which I was heavily involved with the mathematical modelling and quantitative analysis group, his influence was fairly important. Apart from that it would be hard for me to implicate any particular person, academic or non-academic, outside of geography who had a significant impact on my thinking and activities.

RS: What things in general, or in relation to geography, would you like to be remembered for? How about geography first?
RG: I think probably the single most important thing has been my contribution to the development of behavioural geography. I think that’s fairly well recognised and I hope it continues to be recognised. Apart from that, there are a number of other areas which I feel I’d be quite happy if people recognised my efforts, particularly two areas; one is building bridges with the discipline of psychology and more lately cognitive science, spatial cognition and artificial intelligence in those areas; and secondly I’d be very happy if people recognised my work in focusing the attention of the discipline on disability.

RS: Do you want to talk then about your GPS work, I think this might be an appropriate place to mention that?

RG: Yeah. I lost most of my vision in 1984 and that was a very significant turning point in my life.

I had actually been working for seven or eight years prior to that with borderline retarded individuals so I was already working in a disability context. But then to become disabled myself was a really serious blow and I really did not know how to handle it.

I had some friends here on campus, a couple of psychologists, Jack Loomis and Roberta Klatzky, who came to my office one day and offered to help. I didn’t know how they could help, but they offered to help by going away and reading articles in my research area and then meeting with me once a week to abstract them and talk about them.

Well, that started back in 1985 and we’ve been meeting ever since – for 15 years – until recently, we met every Friday. Even when Roberta Klatzky went to the Chair of Psychology at Carnegie Mellon, we would have weekly telephone conferences about our ongoing research. Now we’re down to about once every three weeks, but the conversation is still there. We continued working, we have continued working in this area and I’ll come back to talk a little bit about what we’re doing in a minute.

But historically I went to Australia again on a sabbatical in 1986 and stayed in the Newcastle area. I didn’t officially attach myself, or want to be attached to any university, I was still sort of recovering and trying to figure out how to work in an academic environment, but Don Parks who was in Newcastle at that time, was a good friend. We visited a few times and then around about Christmas he came up with the idea of building a talking geographical Christmas card. And he went out and he bought talking Christmas cards and he cut out their little speakers and the little chips and arranged them behind a map of the University.
of Newcastle campus so that I could explore it tactually. As I explored it there would be little chimes played and it would show me how to walk around the campus and what paths to follow and things. We parlayed that into an idea for an auditory tactual combined map and Don took off work with this and invented the device called Nomad which was an auditory tactile information system and it showed me that using today’s technology we could make maps and graphics available to blind people in ways that they had never been able to access this type of information before.

So, in effect it meant that now blind people could do geography whereas it was extremely difficult for them in the past. We worked together on that for a number of years and have continued interacting on other products that he’s developed, but I was really turned on by the idea of using geographic knowledge and geographic technology to sort of crack the print barrier, to crack the graphics barrier so that blind and vision impaired people could, including myself obviously, could get access to relevant geographic material.

At the same time and parallel with this the two psychologists at Santa Barbara and I were working on an idea that Jack Loomis wrote in a white paper for us to talk about, about developing a guidance system for blind people, a navigation system in which he described the possible creation of the virtual reality in auditory space rather than visual perceptual space. We thought this was a great idea, got some funding from the National Institute of Health and began looking at the difference between blind and sighted people, their spatial abilities and their ability to perform certain navigational tasks and when we found out that we could not find statistical differences, statistically significant differences between the performance on a range of navigation tasks between blind people and fully sighted people, then the idea of building a guidance system that used modern technology and could be used by both sighted and blind people became a reality.

So in 1990 we started working on actually building the physical system, again with funding from the National Institute of Health, particularly the National Eye Institute. And we worked on, we decided that we’d use GPS, the global positioning system, to locate and track an individual, we’d build a GIS, a geographic information system, of the local environment which included all the information a person would need in order to comprehend where they were and what was surrounding them, layout-type information. Again information that’s completely out of the reach of blind people unless someone stands there and describes in details what’s surrounding them. And then the third modular component of this was the virtual auditory display which meant that as
you walked around, as a blind person walked around an environment it appeared as if the environment talked to them. So in the virtual world and coming from the base map in the computer we’d get identification of surrounding features, environmental features. So, say the library would call to you off in the direction, the exact direction that it was from you and the volume would give you an idea of how distant it was.

RS: So you need a headset?

RG: Oh yes, you have a stereo headset and on top of that was a compass so that constantly allowed the computer to adjust for your head turning so that the environment always remained constant in the virtual system and no matter which way you turned your head the voice would always come from the real, from the virtual location of the real object and you could stand there and I could point to all the different buildings on campus and be 100 percent correct in terms of identifying where they were and approximately how far away they were.

RS: So that’s the photograph of you on your web page trying this out?

RG: Right. But that also meant that blind people could build a survey type, cognitive maps because for the most part the information they could access previously was just linear, and learned specific routes or they and/or their dogs would learn routes but often they didn’t know what was more than 10 feet off to one side on those routes and it was incredibly difficult integrating individual routes into a layout. Humans are not very good at that, that’s one of the reasons why we developed geographic information systems, it does it very well.

Following that, I went to a meeting at the Braille Institute, down on 75th Anniversary, and there was a young guy down there demonstrating a product that he called Talking Signs. This was an infrared device that he’d locate transmitters say over the doorway to an elevator or at the top of the stairs, or a water fountain or a telephone or a toilet, and you’d carry an infrared receiver along with you, a hand-held, just about the size of a channel changer for your TV, and you’d move it around and you could pick up these signals from each of the objects such that I’d know where the stairs were and I’d know where the elevator was and I’d know where the bathroom was, or any other feature to which a transmitter was attached. This means that I can learn the interior of buildings for example. Well one of my graduate students, Jim Master, and I have been working for about the last five or six years in adapting that technology into more widespread use. We have incorporated Talking Signs on the local bus system for example.
RS: In Santa Barbara?

RG: In Santa Barbara, and in the bus terminal. A blind person can stand there with their receiver and examine each bus as it approaches to see whether it’s the bus that they want rather than having to flag down every bus that passes and ask the driver where you’re going and what’s your number and all this type of thing. And we’ve also put them in the terminals so that blind people can walk into the terminals and find where the bathrooms are or the change machine or they can go to a ticket window, an information window and ask for information and so on. It’s proving very successful. We have just finished some workings in the San Francisco area where we’ve put some of these transmitters on the Caltrans Station on the light rail station and the bus stations and taxi stands so that blind people now can travel independently and when they get off in the San Francisco area they can do a mode transfer. They can find by following these signs how to catch the light rail downtown or where to pick up the bus or a suburban destination or so on.

And the fourth thing in this area that I’m working on right now with another researcher who came over for a year from Belfast, from Queen’s University of Belfast to work with me his name’s Dan Jacobson, he had developed a more modern version of the Nomad called Haptic Soundscapes. Now with Nomad you actually had a touch sensitive pad and you had to put a tactual map on it and explore it with your map, but Dan is using what’s called a Haptic mouse and this is a force feedback mechanism so that, and it’s completely computer operated, so that now you can use this mouse to explore what’s on a TV screen. There’s no way you can touch a TV screen to find out what’s on it, but you can explore the screen and explore maps or diagrams or windows that are on the screen. I’ve got a group here out at Florida State where he’s moved to, working on this project right now.

So this is an area as I mentioned in disability in which I’m very proud of the different contributions I have been able to make since starting on it. In doing so I think I’ve been able to show geography and geographers that they can use their accumulated geographic knowledge and expertise and traditional technical strengths, cartography and so on, to reach significant populations or benefit tremendously from these inventions which otherwise are paid no attention to throughout the entire history of geography, so I’m very pleased with the effect of opening up to a very disadvantaged population the chance of bringing an understanding of the real world into their lives.

RS: Quite a jump from the seeing-eye dogs to this high technology solution. Now, we want to move on to question number five. It’s about
Australia. How do you think the discipline has changed in Australia since you began your career? Philosophy? Politically? Teaching methods ....? the philosophical underpinnings?

RG: I’ll make some general comments on this.

Philosophical underpinnings. I think there’s been some very significant changes since I did my undergraduate and early graduate degrees in Australia. I guess that’s paralleled the change in thinking that’s gone on in the discipline at large in the whole international arena. I think I was lucky enough at New England that there were a number of empirically and analytically minded geographers so that I wasn’t brought up to be a traditional descriptive geographer. I was not influenced to be a traditional regional geographer. I was influenced in being a problem solver and to be a problem solver you have to understand scientific method and think about experiments as well as original data collection and the analysis of data in a variety of ways, cartographically, as an expert in the area of your training or analytically. But that was not common in Australia at that time. There was a much more traditional thinking influence largely by regional thinking and a little bit along the lines of humanist thinking. Very different from what I see today.

I know that in the early 1960s Bob Smith had come back from North America and was doing his Ph.D. at ANU and he was sort of beginning to push the quantitative methods and the scientific method and the positivist philosophy at that time and for the most part for the physical geographers in Australia there was no problem, this is how they worked anyway they were physical scientists then and they’re physical scientists now. The human geographers weren’t, they weren’t human scientists in the real sense of the word, in the really scientific sense of the word and they were not too keen on being pushed in that particular direction. So I think that in many ways during the 60s and 70s human geography in Australia maintained a fairly traditional outlook and really did not keep pace with what was going on in the United Kingdom and in America, Canada and the United States. Then in the 1980s there were significant changes as people like, at the end of the 80s or 90s I guess I can’t remember exactly when, when Mike Webber and Ruth Fincher came back to Australia and sort of brought new philosophical ideas with them, political economy and social theory and feminism, and I find those particular areas very strong in Australia now. Probably stronger in Australia than they are in North America. I think in both the United Kingdom and North America there has been a rationalisation and maybe a decline in the importance particularly in the social theory and political economy but I don’t think that’s happened in Australia yet and I don’t see it happening. So, I think philosophically speaking, there
have been, as one might expect, lags in Australia and there is a possibility for in the near future some additional changes to take place as we move into the 21st century and as information and technology become probably equally if not as important as intellectual theory.

RS: Teaching methods?

RG: Yes, I'll make some comments about that. One of my interests for a long time has been geographic education interfacing with anywhere from K through 12, probably even more so than undergraduate and graduate. Australia I think has always had a very active group of geographers interested in education particularly in the early years through the teachers colleges and now spread more widely throughout the whole university system. Some of the early work on curriculum for example I found very innovative and the methods of teaching including the continued use of field trips and field work, still puts them apart from much of say North America where field trips and field work have disappeared from the elementary and high schools almost completely and have also disappeared from most undergraduate and graduate geography departments. So I'd say that in terms of teaching methods Australia has been more or less a leader in this area at least comparable if not more so than what's been going on in Europe and only recently in the last decade and a half has North America's emphasis on education begun to be as extensive as it has been in Australia for a long time. I think also the actual pioneering of geographic information systems has refocused a lot of attention on the K through 12 curriculum and from what I can gather that similar type of impact has already been noted and acted on in the Australian teaching environment. So I'd say as far as teaching methods are concerned, there is a very substantial group of geographic educators in Australia who are well up and maybe beyond the rest of the world in a number of different areas.

RS: Research modes? Perhaps the institutional opportunities?

RG: I think that in research modes again there are differences. I think there's been a far more significant proportion, particularly of human geography in Australia that has adopted post-modernism to research paradigms and to that extent, again in human geography, there is less emphasis on positivist, scientific experimental research.

RS: Do you have an opinion on this?

RG: Yes, I do. I don't see that the emphasis on this paradigm has made any significant contribution to the discipline, in fact it might well be introducing such substantial red herrings that it would not surprise
me to see a resurgence of administrative efforts to close down departments because they cannot see what the benefits of this type of activity is preparing for the future, that it’s becoming information oriented and more technical.

RS: One of the things I have found in Australian geography from talking to a few people, is they feel they’re losing their identity, as geography becomes swallowed up into other departments – town planning or whatever number of different areas.

RG: Well that’s happened in England, in Canada and in Australia and it’s because the geographers have failed to show that they have something different to offer that’s distinct and they will never have that as long as they just copy the activities of other disciplines.

RS: So as President of the AAG you see, you’re in the right position to make a statement about this it seems to me.

RG: Oh well, yes, I mean I’m making a statement like this in every regional meeting I go to. My message is that we’re entering the new century and this new century is not going necessarily to be as tolerant as our current century was of academic activities that are primarily intellectual rather than an accommodation of intellectual and applied. And if you don’t know what your discipline can do in the applied arena anymore you’re going to be put in with some other organisation that really can show the people at large and the administrators and the governing officials that they have something to offer.

RS: That’s right. Well, question number six follows on. In what ways do you think that these changes in the discipline have been driven by forces internal or external to Australian geography?

RG: I would say that most of the changes that have taken place in Australian geography have been driven by external forces. Many Australian geographers are very active in terms of travelling to national and particularly international conferences and they bring back in a very prompt manner reports on what’s going on in Europe, in Asia and in North America in particular where geography is strong and in that way they introduce change into geography. I think perhaps the one area where there’s not as much need to be importing and implementing other ideas from outside the country as I mentioned before is the area of teaching methods where I think there is a lot of innovation and to a certain extent Australian educators are up right up there with the best in the world in this manner. But I don’t see anything uniquely Australian in terms of research modes or philosophical underpinnings.
or anything like that, they appear to reflect changes that have gone on or are going on in the world at large.

I think the same thing is true with respect to the institutional context. There is still a reasonable tie between what happens in Australia and what happens in say the United Kingdom in terms of the structure of tertiary education although they’re not strict imitations of each other and never really have been. The Australians are also noticing what’s going on in Canada and the United States and they have produced a good melange of events related to the institutional context of their disciplines. But it’s still primarily external influence.

Perhaps one thing that has influenced Australian geography and Australian universities more than anything else that one can pinpoint is the implementation of Bob Smith’s recommendations about changing the structure of tertiary education in Australia, making more four year colleges, making the professional egalitarian in terms of their responsibilities and salaries and benefits and all that type of thing, and to a certain extent that for a while at least that tended to reduce the perceived and actual difference between the institutions that were granting advanced degrees and the institutions that weren’t. And perhaps that is somewhat similar to what happened outside the country but the way that it’s been applied massively throughout the whole continent I think is probably different to anywhere else, so that is one activity that, while it’s planning was influenced by a geographer Bob Smith who had had extensive experience, particularly in the North American context, the way that it was implemented in Australia is I think quite different from most other places. But apart from that …

RS: **Number seven. Could you detail the ways in which you have contributed to these changes in Australian geography?**

RG: Well I would have to say that I think my influence on Australian geography has been fairly minimal. It hasn’t been significant in promoting any of the changes, in fact I have been surprised on a number of occasions when visiting Australia that many young Australian geographers including people employed in colleges and universities are not even aware that I am Australian born.

RS: That’s what happens when you stay away for so long.

RG: Well, that’s true, you know I have been back constantly and I always think of myself, until recently anyway when I took out American citizenship after 30-odd years in the country, I’ve always thought of myself as being an Australian geographer and as I said I get back quite
a lot, I travel amongst Australian universities quite a lot and I get surprised when I am introduced and when people are not aware that I am Australian and that my background is in Australian geography and it had a fairly significant influence on the direction that I took in sort of fulfilling my professional training and degree and interests. But other than that I'd say minimal.

RS: Is there something else you want to say while the tape’s running?

RG: One thing I missed out a little bit earlier on actually that I would like to recognise, after I lost my vision and was sort of completely at a loss Mike Webber was at that time Chair of the Department at McMaster University, he heard about this and we've been friends since I first met him in 1970 in Australia, and he organised the McMaster department once a month to put together a cassette tape in which they summarised what they were teaching or what they were researching and it gave me at least an idea from that department, which was a very significantly ranked department, what geographers were doing. The only other geographer to do that with any regularity was Peter Gould so I had these two sets of tapes, one being produced by Mike and his group and one by being produced by Peter Gould that sort of kept me in touch with the profession at a very critical time in my rehabilitation process and I've always greatly appreciated that particular fact and you know, whenever I get the chance in coming to Australia I go down and visit with Mike and Ruth in Melbourne and I'm, you know, I don't know how I can express that appreciation and debt that I owe them except in a situation like this to recognise that they participate very much in my returning me to active work in the field.

RS: Travelling around for the AAG, do you want to comment on that at all?

RG: My December newsletter column as President of the AAG, I'll comment on that. It starts off with the title “Let’s Bring Back the Peanuts”, but in essence I start by saying I'm getting heartily sick of pretzels and that's because I'm doing so much travel.

RS: I had peanuts when I flew to Reno where I met you.

RG: Well some time ago, there was a move amongst, by a small group of people who were allergic to peanuts to have peanuts taken off the snack menus in all airlines and pretzels substituted and I figure that last year and this year I’ve been doing over 110 trips for the AAG and I'll bet on 108 of them I’ll get pretzels. Every one I’ve been on this year I’ve got pretzels.
Anyway, the whole purpose of this December newsletter column is to point out, that by going to the regional meetings you learn an awful lot more about the profession and I take to task the larger institutions who think they're above all this, you know they only have to go to the national meetings type of thing, and they don’t participate as fully as they should in the regional meetings. One of my themes in this is to get the major institutions back into their local neighbourhoods. I guess with just the IAG and the Australian Geographical Society they're not at odds with each other (are they?) and there isn't the similar type of thing in Australia I don’t think. I did notice when I was in New Zealand the first time and every time I've been back that they have a wonderfully integrated geographic community over there.

RS: Size probably helps.

RG: Well, it's not just that, it's attitude. I mean the most significant people in geography in the country are extremely willing to integrate at their meetings with the newest elementary or high school teacher. Everyone from teaching to university level feels they're part of a geography community and there are not these artificial levels, you know 'I'm a four year university Ph.D. granting institution person, I don't really talk to four year colleges and I don't want anything to do with teachers'. There's still a little bit of that in Australia I think, a little bit of class consciousness.

RS: There certainly is in California.

RG: Oh yes, very much over here. There's arrogance, intellectual arrogance.

RS: Well there certainly is separation. So, a closing word? Advice for young geographers?

RG: Yes, I think geography is about to enter a new phase where it's image is going to become positive and it's going to be recognised once again as a contributing academic, social and applied discipline. But, this will only happen in any particular country if the geographers in that country are themselves aware of what their country needs from them, and they don’t go off in naval gaze in their critical thinking towers. They have to be aware that in order to survive in the next century they can afford to have a reasonable amount of pure intellectual curiosity, but they also have to have a reasonable amount of application, and if they run short on the application they’ll find more departments are being merged with other departments who are more application oriented, and if they want to retain their independence and to improve
their image, they've got to look at the new century from a completely different point of view from what they've looked at this, particularly for the last 50 years of this century.

RS: Thank you very much.

References