

**COGNA 2006  
Boulder, Colorado  
October 17-21, 2006  
FINAL REPORT**

**Background:**

The Colorado Board of Geographic Names tentatively agreed to host the 2006 COGNA conference, with Bill Bright as conference organizer, in 2004. At the fall, 2005 meeting of the Colorado Board, it was agreed that the Board would go forward with this commitment. Concern was expressed about Bill Bright's health (specifically back problems) which might prevent him from being able to carry through with the conference. Bill asked his colleague at the University of Colorado, Andrew Cowell, if he would be willing to help out if needed, and Cowell agreed. Bill, Andrew and the Board jointly agreed to move forward with planning and hosting as of that board meeting in October, 2005.

The specific dates for the conference (in October) were chosen to avoid having two conferences within one fiscal year (as would have occurred in September). The dates of Oct. 17-21 were the earliest that the Millennium Harvest House had available.

No specific theme was selected for the conference, though Bill Bright made an effort to bring in a diversity of different speakers from many backgrounds.

No one-day fee was advertised, though it was agreed that the charge would be \$60. No inquiries about this fee were made to Bill or Andrew, though Wayne received a few.

**Pre-conference:**

An initial mailing with a registration form was done in late July, 2006. The registration form was also placed on the COGNA website in downloadable, pdf form. The mailing went to previous COGNA attendees, based on the database of previous attendees which is maintained by Wayne Furr. Registrations were to go to Bill Bright's home.

In August, 2006, Bill Bright came to the conclusion that his health would not permit him to continue organizing the conference. He met with Andrew Cowell, who agreed to take over as the head organizer due to the emergency situation. Bill and Andrew reviewed conference records, emails, event planning and so forth up to that point, and Bill transferred everything to Andrew. Bill indicated his willingness to keep in contact to answer questions as necessary.

Due to the sudden change of events, an emergency meeting of the Colorado Board and Wayne Furr was arranged for later in August, 2006. At that meeting, Wayne explained many details regarding running the COGNA conference, since few or none on the Colorado Board had experience with previous conferences. Extensive checking was done of the current status of finances, hotel, tour bus, speakers, etc. Many on the Colorado Board volunteered to help out with numerous tasks.

COGNA registrations came in quite slowly in August. In late August, an email was sent to regular attendees, reminding them to register, and extending the date when late registration fees would go into effect until Oct. 1. At the same time, registrants were told to send materials to Andrew Cowell at the University of Colorado rather than to Bill Bright. Few people seem to have gotten this message or paid attention to it, as materials continued to be sent to Bill Bright right up

until the opening of the conference, though some did send to Cowell as well. The situation was further complicated in that Wayne Furr was contacted by various people personally about the conference, and many of those registrations went to him in Oklahoma. Also at this time, Bill Bright was diagnosed with inoperable brain cancer, and became no longer available to answer questions or participate in any way in the conference. As he went into first the hospital, then the hospice, many messages to him from those interested in the conference (by mail, phone, email) went unanswered for several days as no one was at his house to forward things regularly.

In the end, around one third of registrations came in after the Oct. 1 deadline, with payment of late registration fees. Some way of encouraging more on-time registrations should be considered, perhaps – planning is quite difficult when one third or more of folks register late, including 15-20% registering at the door. We had to tell the hotel to drop continental breakfasts for fear of running low on funds, but then two days before the conference we added it back as money suddenly came pouring in, for example.

Severe problems developed with the conference bank account. Because Bill was physically incapacitated, he was unable to go to the bank and add Andrew Cowell's name to the account, which had been set up with \$300 from COGNA. It turned out that even a letter from Wayne or power of attorney was not sufficient. Therefore, we could not access the account Bill had set up, with him as sole signatory. Andrew Cowell attempted to set up a second account, but because COGNA is not incorporated and registered in any state, the banks would not set up an account (due to tightened restrictions ultimately stemming from 9/11 regarding proof of organizational legitimacy). Eventually, it was decided that Wayne would handle finances through the COGNA account in Oklahoma, with Cowell sending him the checks. It may be that this would actually be the easiest way to handle things from now on, provided that the conference organizer is added to the COGNA account in Oklahoma each year and provided checks and a credit card. Eventually, Andrew Cowell was able to get access to the account via a complicated series of document signings and transfers, and was able to retrieve the last \$90 from the account (the remainder having been spent by Bill Bright or lost due to monthly maintenance charges).

Consideration should be given to setting up credit card payment options. Several government agencies are moving towards this as their only payment method, and this was a problem for a handful of people at this year's conference.

Arrangements for the tour, with Gray Line of Denver, went smoothly. Enough people had registered and paid by Sept. 30 that we were able to pay our minimum to Gray Line on that date (paying for 27 people, with the minimum being 20). By the time the tour eventually departed, 55 people had actually signed up, though 8 dropped out at the last minute. Several were concerned about getting back in time for late-afternoon or evening plane flights. The 4pm return time (vs. original schedule of 6pm) seemed to work better in this regard.

Hotel arrangements, with the Millennium Hotel, also went relatively smoothly. The minimums for the room blocks were met without a problem, and as far as we know, all guests stayed at that hotel for the conference. The figures for room occupancy were:

Monday	10 rooms
Tuesday	47
Wednesday	50
Thursday	48
Friday	44
Saturday	28

TOTAL 227

The conference was held in the hotel. The National Park Service covered AV costs, up to \$1000, which was a great help. Internet connections were purchased for all three days of the conference, along with screens and microphones, while the organizers provided a digital projector from the USFS (which saved over \$1000 based on the hotel rates for this item). Individuals brought their own laptops.

Two speakers were paid honoraria for their attendance. One was a local historian and author, while the other was a Northern Arapaho elder who had to drive from out of state and spend the night.

### **The Conference:**

Exact numbers of attendees at various events was difficult to predict due to the difficult pre-conference registration and payment situation. We received around 12 walk-up registrations at the door. Final numbers to the hotel were:

- 70 for the opening night reception (including 10 spouses)
- 60 for the continental breakfasts and breaks on the three main days of the conference
- 72 for the banquet (again including spouses)

The actual overall number of attendees included 73 paid or supposed to be paid and 2 life members with registration waived. There were also 12 spouses/visitors who paid for the reception, and 7 invited speakers. The actual attendees each of the three main days were closer to 70 than 60, but the food turned out to be adequate, except on the night of the opening reception (which had 75-80 in attendance). Italian antipasto appetizers were provided for the reception, but many people seemed to treat this as dinner, and the food was gobbled up quickly. Perhaps either more food should be provided, or else very obviously snack-type food should be chosen, that will not encourage people to fill whole plates and move to the table to eat an early dinner.

On Tuesday, the 17<sup>th</sup>, the Colorado Board held an open public meeting. This was well attended and fairly lively, marked in particular by a discussion of the name Mt Kiamia (later resubmitted as Mt KIA/MIA) which was proposed to honor members of the military in those categories.

On Wednesday, the 18<sup>th</sup>, events got off to a somber start with the announcement of Bill Bright's death on Sunday, the 15<sup>th</sup>; the creation of a memorial fund for him by the Endangered Language Fund was also announced. After the announcement that Colorado Governor Bill Owens had declared this "geographic names awareness week," complete with a signed declaration, morning talks were delivered by Skip Theberge, and by Andrew Cowell and Alonzo Moss (Northern Arapaho Tribe) on Native American place names in Colorado and Wyoming. The Domestic Names Committee of the US Board held their open public meeting in the afternoon. This lasted for four hours.

On Thursday, the State/Federal roundtable was held in the morning, chaired by Tim Norton. In the afternoon, Sylvia Pettem, a local newspaper columnist, delivered a talk on Boulder mining camps. Her weekly column on Monday had mentioned the conference. The business meeting was also held on Thursday. Discussion of the need for multiple signatures on the bank account, as well as the need to use the Oklahoma account in the future for conference organizing, were key topics.

On Friday, Colorado board member Dave Wolf lead another roundtable discussion on issues surrounding place naming and federal agencies. In the afternoon, Rebecca Moore of Google Earth presented a talk on the company's ongoing projects, and finally Patricia Limerick, the noted western historian, presented an entertaining talk on finding one's way through the west with placenames. The banquet was well-attended, and enlived by Lloyd Clark's message that although he could not make the conference, he wanted his registration fees to be used to pay for additional wine for everyone. Ken Foote, of the CU geography department, gave a talk on names and memorials in relations to the different kinds of tragic events which occur across the landscape. (Banquet food choices, by the way, were 31 pork chop, 32 chicken, 9 squash ravioli).

The Saturday toponymic tour traveled west into mountains, where notable stops were at two gold-mining towns, Nederland and Eldora. The tour then followed the scenic Peak-to-Peak highway north to the town of Estes Park. This road provided great views of the high mountains of the continental divide to the west. We went into Rocky Mountain National Park (for free thanks to Chick Fagan) and drove to around 9000 feet elevation, where they road was closed due to snow. We got great views of the high peaks, with many historical locations visible, as well as various sites important to the Arapaho Indians (following up on the talk Wednesday morning). The tour stopped at the Visitor's Center, where various place name books were available, then again at Estes Park for lunch and shopping. We returned to Boulder in the afternoon from the north, completing a nice loop. The tour lasted from 8 am to 4 pm, which was about right (with stops in Nederland, RMNP and Estes Park as well as briefer stops at three other spots). It was led by Andrew Cowell, who has done research on Arapaho place names in the Rocky Mountain National Park area.

Important conference volunteers were George Orłowski, Terry Ketelson, Dave Wolf, Maria McCormick, Bob Malcolm and Lisa Kok. Many thanks for their help. Wayne Furr also took on an unexpectedly heavy role in both planning and financial management due to Bill Bright's absence.

**COGNA 2006  
Financial Report**

**Revenues:**

Conference Registrations (regular @ \$115)	45	\$5,175
Registrations (late @ \$130)	30	\$3,900
Reception for spouses (@ \$20)	11	\$220
Banquet (@ \$38)	72	\$2,736
Toponymic Tour (@ \$65)	51	\$3,315

TOTAL		\$15,346 expected as of 12/5
	Foreign exchange differences and shortages	-23.78
		\$15,322.22

Note: \$86 (below, wine) was received as cash revenue, then immediately transferred as cash to Cowell. Thus: \$15,236.22 expected deposit  
\$15,506.82 deposited  
[ + \$270.60 discrepancy]

**Expenses:**

Toponymic Tour	\$2,725
Conference Bags	\$208.32
Mailing (by Andrew Cowell)	\$16.98
Stamps (by Wayne Furr)	\$7.80
[Wine (purchased by Andrew Cowell) [already subtracted above]	\$86]
Colorado Board, notebooks	\$197
Honoraria	\$300
Millenium Hotel, Boulder, CO	\$9,305.63
Refunds	\$406
Collection fees	\$40
Chase Bank non-active account fee	\$10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$13,216.73</b>

**NET CONFERENCE REVENUE**

15,506.82 - 13,216.73 = \$2,290.09

Note1: Start-up Loan from COGNA (Deposited in Chase Bank, Boulder, CO	\$300
[\$200 bus deposit and \$10 bank expense accounted for under Expenses above	- \$210]
Returned from Chase Bank account	\$90
Start-up Loan repaid in full	\$300

**NET COGNA REVENUE** 2,290.09 – 210 = \$2,080.09

**ADDITIONAL EXPENSES**

Note 2: Expense for a speaker phone paid by Lou Yost, BGN Executive Secretary	\$95.72
Note 3: Expenses for 2 days audio visual package paid by Chick Fagan, NPS	\$1,097.61