

## International Corner

# Informal AWG Puerto Rico Chapter Thrives

Lynette Alomar

AWG international members come from many countries including Australia, Brazil, Belgium, Egypt, England, Germany, Iceland, Iran, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Russia, Switzerland, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates, and Zambia. There is also a small Hispanic American country, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, where an informal local AWG chapter has been thriving for over a decade.

AWG's Puerto Rico chapter began when I returned as a young geologist to Puerto Rico from Texas Tech University in 1996 and started to work as a Research Assistant and Professor Assistant at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez Campus in 1997. With the support and endorsement of Dr. Nancy A. Grindlay (currently a Professor at the University of North Carolina), I helped organize an informal AWG chapter. Five members, all graduate school students at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez Campus, were the first chapter members. Although the founding group was very small, the chapter members had a lot of enthusiasm. Meetings and activities began fairly soon after I was nominated to lead the chapter. Geologists like Lorna Jaramillo-Nieves, Ph.D., and Audeliz Matias, Ph.D., were very motivated and actively involved in launching the chapter. Through thick and thin, the chapter grew during its first ten years. I eventually passed on the chapter's leadership to Dr. Lorna Jaramillo-Nieves, now a Professor at the University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras, Although I now reside in the northeastern U.S, I still actively support Puerto Rico's informal chapter and am involved in all the aspects of its growth.

The chapter now has approximately 20 members. Activities such as meetings for women in the geosciences, mentoring of female geoscientists, professional support, and potluck dinners have been held through the years. At this moment, the AWG Puerto Rico Chapter is at a new level. We are actively and aggressively working to increase our membership. The informal chapter would like to become a formal chapter of AWG by next year. The AWG Puerto Rico Chapter has the support of the Puerto Rico Geological Society of Professional Geologists. This support comes from members of both genders who truly believe in the organization. If you are interested in getting involved please contact me at [lynette\\_alomar@yahoo.com](mailto:lynette_alomar@yahoo.com).

The AWG Puerto Rico Chapter is looking forward to continually growing and reaching out to other Caribbean and Hispanic American countries. My own background in Puerto Rico and as a member of AWG was and continues to be a guiding force in starting and maintaining the AWG Puerto Rico Chapter. When I was in the eighth grade in a small middle school in the northeast of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico I realized that women could pursue careers in the geosciences. Since that moment, I have been interested in geology. With the support of great professors I was able to pursue a career as a geologist in Puerto Rico and the U.S. My passion for geology has helped me to support women of all ages to pursue a career in geosciences.

## The Author

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*Playa de Sardinera on Puerto Rico's north coast, west of San Juan. (Photo: Prof. David Bush, Univ. of West Georgia)*



*Geology students on eolianite at Punta Vacia Talega about 10 miles east of San Juan, Puerto Rico. (Photo: Prof. David Bush, Univ. of West Georgia)*