What’s in a name?
In Shakespeare’s popular tragedy, Juliet uses this line to indicate to Romeo that names are an unimportant consideration in their relationship. Here I intend to discuss quite the opposite. With the development of techniques used to produce hydrocarbons directly from source rocks, such as shale gas and tight oil, there has been some interest in broadening our Division’s scope and name to include the study of other source rocks, such as black shales. Partly this is in recognition of the overlap between coal geology and the study of other organic-rich rocks. For instance, vitrinite reflectance was originally developed for use in coals but is now applied as a universal indicator of thermal maturity. Additionally, this name change is a means to increase the size and participation in a division who has seen limited growth and is tied to a fuel whose use and production is waning in North America.

However, a proposed change in the breadth of topics covered by the division is not without concern. Growth for the sake of growth is not always a positive goal. Similarly, by becoming too broad, there is serious concern that the real focus of the division is being diluted. Also, the division awards are strongly linked to focus purely on coal geology. As a potential name change has potential to impact all division members, we are looking to you to provide your insight and thoughts on this idea. Should there be enough interest in changing the name of the division, expect to see this in the division elections for next year.

In the meantime, it has been my pleasure to serve as 2013-2014 chair of the Division and I hope to see all of you in Vancouver.

Mark Engle
Chair, GSA Coal Geology Division

Lois Yoksoulian, Coal Geologist Editor
The 2014 Division membership totaled 254 people worldwide from state and national geological surveys, academia and industry. The Division’s quarterly financial statement indicates that the total revenue for the period is $1,359.07 all in dues income Expenses totaled $1,736.67, exceeding our revenue by $377.60. Expenses included awards, travel, and catering costs. Our net assets’ total amount is 5,837.82

2014 Division Information


Coal Geology Division Sessions for the 2014 Annual Meeting

Here’s a quick update on the coal division sponsored and co-sponsored sessions that are scheduled for the GSA Annual Meeting in Vancouver. We hope to see you there!

T88: North American Coal and Source Rock Geology.


T114: The Fate of Passive Acid Mine Drainage Treatment Systems: Results, Solutions, and Advances for Continued Improvement of Impaired Waters.

T188: Organic-Rich Mud Rocks: Geochemistry, Physical Properties, and Paleo-Environments

T191. What Do We Know about Fluids Produced from Unconventional Reservoirs?”

2015 Geological Society of America Annual Meeting

Baltimore, Maryland, November 1-4.

Important reminders!

- Field trip proposal deadline: December 1, 2014.
- Technical session proposal deadline: February 1, 2015.
- Short course proposal deadline: February 2, 2015.

2013 Annual Meeting, Denver CO: Awards and Highlights

Best Paper Recipient:

Paper 281-5: GREB, Stephen F. The role of accommodation space on the preservation of in situ trees in the coal fields of the Appalachian Basin

Best Poster Recipients:

Poster 348-14: SRINIVASARAGHAVAN, Vishnu, RIMMER, Susan M., TOBIN, Amberly, RAHMAN, Mohammad W., ANDERSON, Ken. Influence of coal lithotype composition on the oxidative hydrothermal dissolution (OHD) process

Dr. Fariborz (Fari) Goodarzi after receiving his plaque and silver dish as winner of the Gilbert H. Cady Award, being congratulated by 2013 CGD Chair Margo Corum.

Dan Ritter from the University of Arizona receiving a plaque for the Antoinette Lierman Medlin Analytical/Laboratory Award from 2013 CGD 1st Vice Chair Mark Engle for his project entitled "Investigating the impacts of hydrologic conditions, coal maturity, and groundwater pumping on the process of microbial methanogenesis".
Michelle Johnston from the University of Kentucky receiving a plaque for the Antoinette Lierman Medlin Analytical/Laboratory Award from 2013 CGD 1st Vice Chair Mark Engle for her project entitled "A petrographic characterization of the Leatherwood coal bed in eastern Kentucky".

Trent Garrison from the University of Kentucky receiving a plaque for the Antoinette Lierman Medlin Field Award from 2013 CGD 1st Vice Chair Mark Engle for his project entitled "Coal fire emissions and water quality".