MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Colleagues:

The abstracts are in and by the time you read this, the final program for the St. Louis meeting will be set. It will be a good one for Hydrogeologists, and we think it is especially appropriate for the time and place.

We have a symposium, co-sponsored with the Engineering Geology Division, on problems and methods related to site characterization where ground-water flow is non-Darcian, and a two-day field trip where you can see karst phenomena firsthand. Another session is on the theme of the demands that will be made of hydrogeologists in the ensuing decade. The twenty-first century will be only a decade ahead when we leave St. Louis, and we all have experienced the growing demands made of geologists, particularly hydrogeologists, often in areas of technology for which we have no special training. It’s time we thought about it, and the annual meeting is a good time to start. One of the greatest needs for our members, in the course of their daily work, is better training in management skills. We hear this whenever we ask advice on education, at any level. The Division is sponsoring a two-day short course in project management, offered by John Moore, and covering the topic from planning to report writing. John has presented this course to other groups and it has been very well received.

It won’t be easy to decide whether to go on the field trip or take the short course, but you should take advantage of one or the other.

Of course, in addition to these specially arranged events, we have several sessions of selected volunteered papers and poster sessions. As has been the case for some time, the “open” sessions at Denver last year were very good, with attendance near 100 throughout the day. The poster sessions also are becoming more and more popular, likely because of the opportunity for discussion. Check them out and think of presenting one next year.

Our Birdsall lecturer this year was Warren Wood, and the series was a great success. You’ll have a chance to hear the lecture on Tuesday morning just before the Hydrogeology Division annual business meeting and awards luncheon. By the way, get your luncheon tickets early if you haven’t already ordered them with your pre-registration. It’s a popular event.

Leslie Smith has agreed to be next year’s Birdsall lecturer, and we look forward to hearing his presentations! See elsewhere in this Newsletter for a preview of his topics and how to invite him to your institution.

Stan Davis is the 1989 winner of the O. E. Meinzer Award. I cannot think of anyone who has contributed more to Hydrogeology over the course of several decades -- and he is still a leading scientist in the field! Jerry Vineyard, Gerald Meyer and Charles Lee McGuinness (posthumous) are being recognized with Distinguished Service Awards. On Tuesday evening we meet for cocktails to honor our award winners and to visit with old friends.

It’s a good time to be a hydrogeologist -- even an old one. But with all the opportunities that are coming our way, we have to accept additional responsibilities, such as keeping up with the advances in technology of our discipline. Active participation in the Hydrogeology Division of GSA is the single best thing you can do to fill this responsibility.

See you in St. Louis!

Robert N. Farvolden
1989 Chairman
Hydrogeology Division

PLEASE VOTE!

Please show your support to the Division by completing and returning the ballot attached to this Newsletter. Thanks!
It appears that our scientific and engineering colleagues do not have a very high opinion of the work we do. Apparently it is their perception that we are not working on or solving fundamental problems. If this is the case, then perhaps our broadening of interests into traditional geologic problems may gain us the recognition of our colleagues in other sciences.

Where will the hydrologists come from? My guess is that in the future there will be more from the field of engineering and fewer from the field of geology. I say this after just proposing that the next breakthroughs will be in geologic applications. The reasoning is as follows: Enrollment in undergraduate geology is currently depressed due to the decline of the petroleum industry; thus, not only are there fewer students in geology programs that might study hydrogeology, but many deans are reluctant to replace existing faculty openings in geoscience departments, and certainly are not likely to open new positions for "high priced" hydrologists. In addition, many geology departments appear unwilling to modify the traditional mix of courses that have served them in the past.

Coupling this with the aggressive attitude of some engineering departments in expanding their role in ground water, their traditionally higher salaries to attract faculty, and the ultimate shift in contaminant hydrology toward remedial action, the result is that the students with an engineering background will predominate.

In summary, it appears that contaminant hydrogeology will continue to provide excellent employment opportunities with a larger share of professionals coming from engineering backgrounds than in the past. However, I think that the real challenge and many of the significant breakthroughs will come from the application of quantitative hydrology to traditional geologic problems.

(Answer to quiz: A confining bed)