Greetings from the Chair

Greetings! I welcome you to a new year in the GSA Geology & Society Division.

The G&S Division had great presence at the 2007 GSA Annual Meeting in October. We were active in partnering with division members in sponsoring many topical sessions on a wide array of subjects in geology and society, judging many excellent oral presentations given by geoscience students, and hosting an exciting G&S Distinguished Lecture event, with John Hickenlooper, mayor of Denver and Vicki Cowart, former Colorado State Geologist as the featured speakers. We hope you were there.

We encourage you to attend the GSA Annual Meeting in 2008, www.geosociety.org/meetings/, which will be held jointly with the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, Soil Science Society of America, and Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies with the Gulf Coast Section of SEPM. The meeting is being hosted by the Houston Geological Society and will be held in Houston, Texas on October 5-9, 2008.

You also will want to look at the schedule of GSA sectional meetings this year www.geosociety.org/sectdiv/. They promise to offer an intriguing array of sessions, while also offering the benefits of smaller, more local meetings where you can attend a larger percentage of the talks that you really want to see, chat with colleagues from neighboring institutions, and have more time for field trips and working with your students. We plan to have a G&S booth at several section meetings this year, so
Please stop by to visit with us, or even better, plan to help staff the booth for an hour or two.

As the year progresses, we would like to hear from you about your interests and concerns in geology and society issues. Concerns about citizens’ access to natural resources – whether it is clean air, water, or energy – continue to be at the forefront for most of us, along with issues in climate, education, and the geoscience workforce. But however global the topics may be, the issues are local to each of us, and that is where we can each play a role.

The GSA G&S Newsletter is your vehicle for sharing ideas, building coalitions, and moving action items into play. In this issue you can find the following newsworthy articles and announcements:

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Marilyn Suiter, Chair

GSA Geology and Society Division Annual Business Meeting for 2007

Chair Susan Halsey convened the GSA Geology and Society Division's annual meeting at 5:40 pm and welcomed all in attendance to this year’s Distinguished Lecture. She reminded everyone that all were welcome at the reception to follow and were invited to stay for the 2007 GSA Geology and Society Division Business Meeting. Sue introduced Marilyn Suiter, First Vice-Chair of the Division, who introduced the format for the evening’s Distinguished Lecture Series presentation: “Moving Earth – One Person at a Time.” The presentation featured an interview and dialogue with John Hickenlooper (formerly a petroleum geologist and now Mayor of the City of Denver) and Vicki Cowart (formerly State Geologist of Colorado and now President and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains). Approximately 150 persons were in attendance at the Hickenlooper-Cowart event, with many staying for the reception and annual Business Meeting that followed.

From left: Vickie Cowart, Marilyn Suiter, and Mayor John Hickenlooper (photo courtesy of GSA)

At 7:30 pm, following the reception, Halsey convened the annual Business Meeting of the GSA Geology and Society Division. The business of the Division was transacted as follows:

1. Treasurer's Report. Tom Evans, Secretary-Treasurer of the Division, reported that the unrestricted net assets of the Division at the end of September 2007 were $2,799.99, a drop of just over $600 from this same time last year. Evans reported that the Division has about 380 members as of this date. As noted in previous years, Evans said that the nearly level membership and decline in assets reflect a concern of the Division’s Management Board. He stated that, as before, we need to "grow the Division" to support future program opportunities. The slight drop in membership coupled with a new program (the Best Student Presentation carries a $300 stipend) is the reason for the decline in overall available revenue.

2. Secretary’s Report. Evans noted that this is his last meeting as Secretary-Treasurer of the Division. He has prepared the Division’s documents for transfer to Jon Goodwin, the
Division’s incoming Secretary-Treasurer. He said that he and Jon will continue to work to have a smooth transition of the Division’s organizational documents and financial records.

3. Chair’s Report.
   a. **Introduction and Thanks to Management Board and Liaisons.** Halsey introduced the current and incoming Management Board members: Marilyn Suiter, First Vice-Chair who will assume the Chair position following the conclusion of this meeting; Karen McCurdy, Second Vice-Chair who will assume the First Vice-Chair position; Jim Davis, newly elected Second Vice-Chair; and Jon Goodwin, newly elected Secretary-Treasurer replacing Tom Evans. Halsey remains on the Management Board as Past Chair. She also mentioned that Rex Buchanan serves as the Division’s representative on the GSA Geology and Public Policy Committee, thanking Rex for this service to the Division, and she also introduced and thanked Jon Price of the GSA Council, who serves as the Division’s liaison to that group. Both were asked to stand to be recognized.

   b. **Special thanks to Dick Berg, Tom Evans, and John Kiefer.** Halsey made particular note of the service of Dick Berg as Past Chair during the previous year, and especially his continuing service to the Division as Newsletter Editor. It was noted that 2-4 newsletters are prepared every year. She then presented Tom Evans, who was completing his second term as Secretary-Treasurer of the Division, and in absentia John Kiefer, the inaugural Chair of the Division, with needlepoint dangles of the GSA emblems in honor of their service as Co-Founders of the GSA Geology and Society Division.

   Tom Evans (top right) and John Kiefer (bottom right).

   c. **General comments.** Halsey observed that there are 26 technical and special sessions sponsored or co-sponsored by the Geology and Society Division at the 2007 Annual Meeting.

4. The Best Student Presentation Award for the 2006 GSA Annual Meeting was presented by Karen McCurdy, on behalf of the Division, to David S. Vinson of Duke University for his research and presentation on the effects of showers on indoor radon levels. For his efforts, David received a plaque and a check for $300. Invited to respond, David expressed his thanks to the Division for this recognition and noted his gratitude to his colleagues and professors at Duke for their help and guidance in identifying and completing the research program.

5. Other Issues for Discussion.
   a. **Report from GSA Council.** Dr. Jon Price is our liaison on GSA Council, as well as a member of the Division, and Jon provided an update on Council activity for the Division's consideration and discussion. In particular, he noted that the Council is interested in broadening division participation at sectional meetings, and that an ad hoc committee has been convened to explore issues related to this opportunity.

   b. **Critical Issues Caucus.** Chair Halsey reported on the Critical Issues Caucus from notes supplied by Pete Palmer. The Critical Issues Caucus consists of the following lead members: Peter Palmer, George Fisher, Ward Chesworth, E-An Zen, Paul Reitan, and Sue Kieffer. They have chosen sustainability issues as a primary activity during this last year raising public awareness about the context of humanity and the challenges of a sustainable future. For example, Pete has given his very interesting talk “Preserve Planet Earth? Why Bother?” to 10 Rotary Clubs, and five other organizations. Paul Reitan has asked the Division’s (and GSA Council’s) support for sponsorship for an accepted symposium at the upcoming International Geological Congress in Oslo this summer entitled “Earth Sciences and the Ethics of Sustainable World Culture.”
6. New Business or Issues. Following the sustainability theme, John Wehmiller from the University of Delaware asked the Division’s sponsorship, and if granted to be passed to Council, for signing on as a member of the Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. They list the sponsors on the DANS list, Disciplinary Associations Network for Sustainability. We were directed to: http://www.aashe.net/dans/associations.php.

7. The Geology and Society Division Distinguished Lecture for 2008 was announced and features Dr. William L. Fisher, currently Leonidas T. Barrow Chair and Professor of the Department of Geological Sciences at the Jackson School of Geosciences at the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Fisher will present his remarks at the 2008 GSA Annual Meeting in Houston.

8. Adjournment. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

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**Fall 2007 Geology & Public Policy Committee Meeting Report**

The Geological Society of America’s Geology and Public Policy Committee (GPPC) met at the 2007 GSA Annual Meeting in Denver. The GPPC develops statements and positions on various topics and forwards them to the GSA Council for their formal approval as GSA policy. Recent position papers include, for example, statements on climate change and evolution.

Probably the most significant GSA activity related to the GPPC was the establishment of a Washington, D.C. office, and the hiring of Craig Schiffries as the Society’s new Director of Geoscience Policy. That office is one outgrowth of GSA’s National Leadership Initiative, for which information is available on the GSA website.

The Denver GPPC meeting included reports from each of the GSA sectional representatives, along with updates about other position papers that are under development. Drafts of those position statements are posted on the GSA website for member comment. This fall’s meeting also included a long discussion of the process for developing position papers, their purpose and how they are used, and how to evaluate their effectiveness.

GSA position papers can be used in a variety of settings, from testifying before Congressional committees, agencies of state government, or local bodies of government, such as school boards of city councils. Members of the Geology and Society Division can suggest topics for positions or bring forward proposals that they would like to see developed further.

Several members of the Geology and Society Division are on the GPPC, including Marilyn Suiter (Division Chair) and Dick Berg (Newsletter Editor). Any of us would be glad to work with members of the Geology and Society Division who have ideas for possible position statements.

Rex Buchanan, G&S GPPC Representative

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**ANNOUNCEMENT:**

**8th Annual Technical Forum on Geohazards in Transportation in the Appalachian Region**

**Marriott Hotel**

**August 5 to 7, 2008**

Charleston, WV

This annual Technical Forum has produced excellent, state-of-the-art, practical presentations and discussions related to geohazards in transportation within the Appalachian region. The Forum is organized by a coalition of government and private entities from across the Appalachian states representing the disciplines of Geology, Engineering, Earth Science, and Design and Construction professionals in transportation.

**Abstracts:** Send abstracts (~150 words) to the following respective Session Chair:

1. Hydrologic & Hydrogeologic Investigations
   Kirk Beach, ODOT, (614) 274-1342;
   kirk.beach@odot.state.oh.us

2. Seismic Hazard, Risk Assessment & Transportation Infrastructure Management
   Wael Zatar, Marshall, (304) 696-6043;
   zatar@marshall.edu
3. Extreme Geotechnical Construction
Steve Brewster, USACE, (304) 529-5279; steve.brewster@lrh01.usace.army.mil

4. Site Characterization for Transportation Infrastructure
Vanessa Bateman, TNDOT, (615) 350-4137; vanessa.bateman@state.tn.us

5. River Processes & Influence on Geohazards
Scott Eaton, James Mason Univ., (540) 568-339; eaton@jmu.edu

6. Remote Sensing
Jane McColloch, WVGS, (304) 594-2930; janemc@geosrv.wvnet.edu

7. Subsurface Investigation Innovations
Jody Stanton, USACE, (615) 736-7906; john.i.stanton@usace.army.mil

8. Modelling and Simulation
Jim Fisher, WVDOT, (304) 558-2885; jfisher@dot.state.wv.us

Forum Information Contact: Tony Szwilski (MU-CEGAS) 304-696-5457(Fax 696-5454), szwilski@marshall.edu or Kirk Beach (ODOT) 614-275-1342, kirk.beach@dot.state.oh.us.

Exhibitor Information: This event has been a good opportunity for exhibitors. A limited space for exhibitor’s room will be available. Contact Barbara Roberts at 304-696-7103 or e-mail her at robertsb@marshall.edu

Registration and Hotel Information: Contact Barbara Roberts at 304-696-7103 or e-mail her at robertsb@marshall.edu

ANNOUNCEMENT:
History of Geology Student Award

The History of Geology Division is soliciting proposals for a student award for the amount of $500. The selected paper will be given at the GSA Annual Meeting for that year. This award, established in 2004, is made possible by a bequest from the estate of Mary C. Rabbitt. Consideration will be given to both undergraduate and graduate students provided the person is a student in good standing at the time of application; the presentation at the GSA Annual Meeting may take place after graduation. Both oral and poster presentations are acceptable, but oral presentations are preferred. Faculty advisor(s) may be listed as second author(s), but not as the lead author of the paper. The proposed paper may be, but not limited to: (1) A paper in the history of geology; or (2) A literature review of ideas for a technical work or thesis/dissertation; or (3) Some imaginative aspect of the history of geology we have not thought of before.

The award consists of a plaque and a check for $500 presented at the History of Geology Division luncheon, and the student will present the winning paper in the History of Geology Division disciplinary session at the next GSA Annual Meeting. It is open to all students regardless of discipline, provided the proposed paper is related to the history of a geological idea/person, etc. After the applications have been received and reviewed by the Award Committee, the winner will be notified. The winner should formally submit his/her abstract for the next GSA Annual Meeting and then register for that meeting in order to present his or her paper at the History of Geology Division disciplinary session. A ticket to the History of Geology luncheon will be provided for the student and a guest. The $500 award and plaque will be presented and the student will be recognized at the annual luncheon. If there are multiple authors, the cash award will be presented to the senior author, and further distribution is up to that person.

Proposal guidelines and application forms are available from the Division website at http://gsahist.org, or if there are any questions about the award, please contact the Division Secretary-Treasurer, Chris Schuberth, kyanite23@verizon.net. Nominees do not have to be members of the History of Geology Division or members of the Geological Society of America.

Due date for proposals and application is May 1 each year so that the proposal content can be reviewed and the selection made for the award in time to meet the official GSA deadline. Also in this way, the GSA abstract can, perhaps, be refined. The Division award committee will make the selection.
ANNOUNCEMENT: Drum Major Institute for Public Policy Seeks Student Activists

The Drum Major Institute for Public Policy (DMI) is a think tank staffed by young progressives who want to drive public policy. This progressive movement now needs a diverse, talented group of activists to view public policy as a vehicle for their activism.

DMI Scholars was created to cultivate the next generation of Chiefs of Staff, Issues Directors, Policy Advisors, and Legislative Analysts who can advance a progressive agenda for our nation. It is a "Public Policy 101," that prepares college students from diverse communities to successfully enter the public policy world.

If you want to learn how to impact the policies that impact you, become a DMI Scholar. The Summer Institute training for DMI Scholars will be in New York City from July 27-August 10, 2008. And if you complete our intensive training successfully, the program will help you explore careers in this field through internships and networking opportunities.

All expenses are covered. Application Deadline is January 27, 2008. www.dmischolars.org

ANNOUNCEMENT: Symposium on Geoscience Education for the 21st Century at IGC in Oslo Norway

The International Geoscience Education Organization under sponsorship of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IGEO-IUGS) is hosting a symposium at the 33rd International Geological Congress, which will be held in Oslo, Norway from August 6-14, 2008.

The symposium (IEE-05) "Geoscience education for the 21st century," will be convened by Ian Clark, Chan-Jong Kim, and Chris King (IUGS Commission on Geoscience Education, Training & Technological Transfer). The symposium will be broken into three themes: 1) Undergraduate Geoscience Education 2) School Geoscience Education; and 3) Informal Geoscience Education (museums, parks, etc.)

Each theme will be linked by the questions "what is relevant for the 21st century?" and "is Earth System Science the most appropriate approach?"

The aim of the symposium will be to canvas a wide audience on these topics and to promote geoscience education worldwide.

Please consider making a presentation. The deadline for abstracts is February 1, 2008.

For more information about the congress go to the IGC website at: http://www.33igc.org/coco
ANNOUNCEMENT:
Symposium on Geoscience for Schools in Developing Countries at IGC in Oslo, Norway

The Association of Geoscientists for International Development (AGID) is organizing a number of symposia alone and in cooperation with other organizations at the 33rd International Geological Congress (IGC) in Oslo, Norway in August 6-14, 2008. For detail information please visit www.33igc.org.

The title of one of the symposia is "Geoscience for Schools in Developing Countries," the code number of which is IEE-02. The conveners of this symposium would like to invite you all to submit abstracts and would also like to request you to kindly circulate it among the interested persons. The deadline of submission of abstract is February 1, 2008.

Please send the abstract of your paper to "Abstract Services Department" 33igcabstract@congrex.com in Oslo within by February 1. In sending your abstract to the IGC in Oslo, please mention Code No. IEE-02 for symposium on "Geoscience for School in Developing Countries". Please send a copy of your abstract to Afia Akhtar at: afia@dhaka.agni.com.

ANNOUNCEMENT:
Preparing Future Teachers of Geoscience

Call for Papers - Special Issue of the Journal of Geoscience Education

The Journal of Geoscience Education (JGE) is soliciting manuscripts for a thematic issue on preparing future teachers of geoscience. Please contact special-issue associate editors, Ann Bykerk-Kaufman abvkerr-kauffman@csuchico.edu or Sandra Rutherford srutherf@emich.edu or JGE Editor Carl Drummond jge@ipfw.edu for further information.

Description

Future teachers are one of the most important constituencies in our geoscience courses. Because they will go on to teach, it is important that we help them learn both geoscience knowledge and effective ways to impart that knowledge to students. Many future middle and high school teachers major in our departments and take both introductory and upper division courses. Future elementary and middle school teachers are an important population in our introductory courses.

Increasingly, we teach geoscience courses that are specifically designed to serve future elementary and middle school teachers.

This issue will examine the spectrum of ways in which geoscience courses are being designed to serve the needs of students who are preparing to become teachers: courses that serve only future teachers, those where future teachers are explicitly considered in the design of the course, and those where evaluation suggests that future teachers are well served.

Some subtopics that may be addressed in this issue include:

- Teaching the nature of science
- Aligning courses with national and state science education standards
- Teaching and modeling best teaching practices (e.g., hands-on activities, guided discovery, collaborative learning, constructivism, etc.)
- Helping students achieve deep lasting understanding of fundamental concepts
- Fostering enthusiasm for and willingness to teach earth science
- Providing opportunities for students to practice planning lessons and teaching children
- Assessing the effectiveness of our courses

**Submission Guidelines**
The submission deadline is March 1, 2008 and the anticipated publication date is November 2008. Letters of submission should state that the manuscript is intended for this special issue. The Journal of Geoscience Education only accepts submissions through its web-based file management system. Authors must submit their manuscripts in pdf format. For specific submission instructions, go to [http://www.nagt.org/nagt/jge/instructions.html](http://www.nagt.org/nagt/jge/instructions.html)