



**Special Features**

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**PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

by Patricia Yocum

The ACRL STS listserv recently posted a query about journal retention policies. Noting that many sci tech libraries have stated a preference to retain the print version even while subscribing to the electronic, the writer asked two questions: 1) What was the reasoning underlying the preference? 2) How was the resulting physical impact (space, shelving, etc.) handled? (March 6, 2007).

Overcrowding in libraries is a real and often chronic issue. A long-standing response to collection growth has been to add capacity, sometimes by adding shelving, shifting older volumes to off-site storage and/or constructing new facilities. Such solutions are expensive, often prohibitively so. The availability of electronic journals now offers the glimpse of a reprieve: convert to digital, pitch the paper, realize savings.

In principle the notion has merit and plenty of appeal. [The summarized responses subsequently posted on stsl@ala.org](mailto:stsl@ala.org), however, give pause to speedy pursuit of this route. Although continuing to grow, electronic backfiles are still in limited availability. Society publishers offer the most complete backfiles while commercial publishers are catching up. Most backfiles are available only with a subscription to the current year. Perhaps the most significant observation summarized is that "Virtually no electronic journals, whether current or backfiles, mirror the print versions." (March 9, 2007)

Two related articles recently published speak to an equally if not more important aspect, namely, the quality of the material in the different versions. In their studies Jacqueline Erdman and Lura Joseph at the University of Illinois

Geology Library examined thirty-five Elsevier earth and planetary science titles. They compared pdf images in the electronic backfiles to the same images in the paper versions. In her case study Erdman found that while digitized figures appeared clear, the quality of photographic images was poor in the pre-2000 electronic versions. Overall she found ~2000 problem images on ~665 pages. (2006) Joseph extended the study to examine all issues of the thirty-five titles in the digital backfile, comparing the quality of their images to the quality in their paper counterparts. Of the 6038 issues examined, Joseph found 4445 digital issues (73.6%) "had at least one image or figure with degraded quality severe enough that it would be necessary to access the print copy in order to obtain useful information". (2006, p. 164)

Images in a scientific article are more than decorative. They are central to the research being reported and are fundamental pieces of the story being told. Remove an image and the story is incomplete. Move the "storybook" to a less accessible place such as remote storage and it becomes difficult to read. Discard the journal altogether –withdraw the paper copy from the library collection– and the story becomes impossible to read. Such can be the effect of a premature decision to withdraw paper backfiles for journals whose digitized versions are not yet what we need them to be.

To its credit Elsevier has agreed to re-scan any issue in the Earth and Planetary Sciences collection which has as little as one unusable image. No date has been set for when this work will be completed. In the meantime, talk is growing in research libraries across the country about withdrawing print holdings when digital backfiles are acquired. Such decisions need to be grounded in fact, not in theory or principle. As Jacqueline Erdman notes, "good decisions must be based on good data." (2006, p. 170). The data that she and Lura Joseph provide are an excellent start. We will need more data and we will need them soon if the complete story of the earth sciences is to be preserved.

**References**

Erdman, Jacqueline Marie, "Image quality in electronic journals: A case study of Elsevier geology titles", *Library Collections, Acquisitions, and Technical Services* v. 30, iss. 3-4, Sept-Dec 2006, p. 169-178, doi:10.1016/j.lcats.2006.08.002

Joseph, Lura E. "Image and figure quality: A study of Elsevier's Earth and Planetary Sciences electronic journal back file package", *Library*

**GEOSCIENCE INFORMATION SOCIETY**  
**2007 Officers**

**President**

Patricia B. Yocum  
Shapiro Science Library  
3026 Shapiro Science Library  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1185  
phone: 734-936-3079  
fax: 734-763-9813  
e-mail: pyocum@umich.edu

**Vice-President (President-Elect)**

Suzanne T. Larsen  
Earth Sciences and Map Library  
UCB 184  
University of Colorado  
Boulder, CO 80309  
phone: 303-492-4611  
fax: 303-735-4879  
e-mail: suzanne.larsen@colorado.edu

**Immediate Past President**

Adonna Fleming  
207A Love Library  
University of Nebraska  
Lincoln, NE 68588-4100  
phone: 402/472-3920  
e-mail: afleming@unlnotes.unl.edu

**Secretary**

Andrea Twiss-Brooks  
John Crerar Library  
University of Chicago  
5730 S. Ellis Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60637  
phone: 773-702-8777  
fax: 773-702-3317  
e-mail: atbrooks@uchicago.edu

**Treasurer**

Renee Davis  
Simpson Library  
University of Mary Washington  
1801 College Ave.  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401  
e-mail: rdavis@umw.edu

**Homepage: <http://www.geoinfo.org>**

Webmaster: Jim O'Donnell  
Geology Library 100-23  
Caltech  
Pasadena, CA 91125  
phone: 626/395-2199; fax: 626/568-0935  
e-mail: jimodo@caltech.edu

**Listserv: <https://lists.purdue.edu/mailman/listinfo/geonet>**

Moderator: Carolyn J. Laffoon  
Purdue University Libraries, EAS  
504 West State Street  
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2058  
phone: 765/494-0201; fax: 765/496-1210  
e-mail: carolyn@purdue.edu

**Newsletter Editor**

Connie J. Manson  
2525 Sleater Kinney Road N.E.  
Olympia, WA 98506  
phone: 360/459-1668; fax 413/280-2755  
e-mail: cjm@thurston.com

**Publications Manager**

Ellie Clement  
Cabot Science Library  
Harvard University  
One Oxford Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
phone: 617.496.8442  
fax: 617.495.5324  
e-mail: clement@fas.harvard.edu

**Publicity Officer**

Shaun J. Hardy  
Carnegie Inst. of Washington  
DTM-Geophysical Laboratory Library  
5241 Broad Branch Road, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20015  
phone: 202-478-7960; fax: 202-478-8821  
e-mail: hardy@dtm.ciw.edu

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GSIS members are encouraged to contribute materials for publication. Material for the June, 2007 issue should be received no later than May 25, 2007. Please send materials by e-mail to [cjm@thurston.com](mailto:cjm@thurston.com)

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Mendelsohn, Loren D. [Journal backfiles: hardcopy vs electronic](#), In: [sts-l@ala.org](mailto:sts-l@ala.org), (listserv) March 9, 2007, posted 17:03:22, accessed March 23, 2007

## VICE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Suzanne T. Larsen

I attended the Associated and Allied Societies (A & AS) of GSA Meeting at GSA headquarters in Boulder, CO on March 3-4. This is the third or fourth time I have attended this meeting to represent GSIS. I have enjoyed doing this because it gives me an opportunity to learn more about the affiliated societies as well as to represent the library and information professional perspective in the discussions when appropriate. Over 20 different societies and groups were represented at the meeting.

On Saturday afternoon we began with a presentation by Edmund Nickless of the Geological Society of London. This year they are celebrating 200 years of earth science with their Bicentennial. The full agenda of talks, events, and field trips can be found at their home page <http://www.geol Soc.org.uk>. Associated with the Bicentennial is the digitization of their entire publications collection. Many of you heard about this endeavor at the Philadelphia GSIS meeting.

A primary discussion topic centered on how GSA and the A & AS could mutually support each other in the planning, processes, and procedures for the annual and sectional meetings. There is an Ad hoc committee working on this and an interim report will be posted on the GSA website.

The state of geoscience education was discussed at length on both days in different venues. Issues at the college level included accreditation of programs and certification of degrees through licensure. I suggested that a consideration of library resources be a part of any accreditation process. A survey of geoscience departments was split almost 50-50 regarding accreditation, a major issue being standardization of curriculum. Issues at the high school level are that earth sciences is not considered a laboratory science and so does not count for science classes required for college admission, that there is no AP test for earth science, and, with the exception of a few states, it is not a required part of the curriculum.

Jack Hess, GSA Executive Director, gave an update on various GSA activities aimed at outreach to Congress. Congressional Visits Day is May 1-2 and GSA will be partnering with a number of groups, such as AGU and AGI, to contact legislators directly regarding issue important to the earth sciences community. GSA is active in COPUS (Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science) at the national level. With all this activity in Washington, GSA is looking to establishing an office there in the near future. Jack gave a

brief update on the GSA Annual Meeting in Houston (2008) which will be held jointly with the Soil Science Society of America, the American Society of Agronomy and the Crop Science Society of America.

## GEOREF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

The GeoRef Advisory Committee met on October 25, 2006 at the Marriott Downtown in conjunction with the GSA/GSIS Annual Conference. In attendance were Harvey Cohen, Shaun Hardy, Lura Joseph, Jim Mehl, Jim O'Donnell, John Steinmetz, Sharon Tahirkheli, and Dennis Trombatore (presiding).

**Budget:** GeoRef is in sound financial condition. Revenue from royalties has risen in 2006. In addition, an agreement with a Chinese consortium that will provide access to GeoRef for many major Chinese universities is pending for the end of October.

The two indexers in the Denver area have resigned and a replacement is being sought.

## Status Reports:

– AGI Leadership:

Marcus Milling stepped down as Executive Director, and Chris Keane is currently Acting Executive Director. A search committee has been formed to seek a new Executive Director. (Dr. P. Patrick Leahy was appointed to the position and will join AGI in early May.)

The Advisory Committee recommended writing a white paper for the new AGI Director. The white paper would inform the new director about GeoRef's role in the geological community, discuss where source material comes from, and comment on replacing USGS libraries as data sources.

– GeoScienceWorld (GSW):

As of June 30, GSW completed its first full year of operations. GeoScienceWorld is growing and GeoRef has gained more subscribers than were expected as a result of participation in GSW. The number of publishers providing GeoRef with metadata has grown, and a further surge in metadata is expected from Geological Society of London and other GSW publications later this year.

– Guidebooks:

At the GSIS Executive Board meeting, members of the Board recommended asking GeoRef if they could completely take over the project to add guidebooks to GeoRef. After discussion, the GeoRef Advisory Committee determined that GeoRef cannot continue this important project alone. In order to get the job done, the combined efforts of GSIS and GeoRef are essential. GeoRef will do the indexing, but GSIS members need to identify the guidebooks to be indexed.

– Serials List:

Requests have been made for an electronic version of the GeoRef Serials List. After a discussion of the consequences of providing this information, the Committee recommended providing a pdf of the list at no charge, but charging for an Excel file of the information.

– State Survey Publications:

At the AASG meeting in Santa Fe (June), state surveys were asked to name a contact person so that publications could be requested by GeoRef. Twenty forms were received, and GeoRef is following up. Connie Manson has completed a report of gaps in GeoRef related to state survey publications, and this report was presented later in the meeting.

– USGS Library:

The situation of the USGS Library was reviewed. The report by Mike McDermott, USGS, to the GSIS was considered, including the search for the National Library Coordinator.

The GeoRef Advisory Committee discussed what happens to AGI indexes when the USGS converts to online journals and excludes walk-ins, thus preventing AGI from gathering indexing information. There was discussion about using non-USGS libraries for collections, and possible incentives for getting information that was formerly obtained from the USGS exchange programs. Other suggested action items include a letter to the new director of the USGS urging the USGS to insure continuation of the flow of information from abroad so that it can be added to GeoRef and made available; and asking the USGS for a list of exchange partners.

– Journal Coverage Study:

The availability of journals has declined at the USGS library. Connie Manson looked at over 700 journals that were not being located by GeoRef staff. The results: 28.5% had ceased publication; 29.6% were online; 13.7% were at “favorite libraries” (easy to get information), 1.3% were not in OCLC, 2% were e-mailed but no reply was received; and 24.7% were held at other libraries.

In looking at the year 2000 vs. present, total serials titles in GeoRef have increased by 10%. Titles at the USGS have declined by 10%. Serials information sent directly to AGI has increased from 13% to 25%. More Open Access material is included. Information from International partners has increased from 24% to 30%.

The question was raised whether it might be possible to have an endowed fund for purchase of non-U.S.A. material. Other sources of information include the large museums, since many have exchange programs.

– Vendor Updates:

There are new vendor contracts for both Ovid and CSA, which may result in timelier reloads. CSA was expected to reload the entire file with corrections shortly after the meeting. Currently OCLC, Ebsco and Highwire load corrections on a regular basis.

– Open Access Journals:

A current list of open access journals being covered in GeoRef was presented. To be included, journals must be freely available from stable URLs and with the intention of remaining free. As an experiment, GeoRef included the series going up from the Indiana Geological Survey. These are all out-of-print items.

The next Committee meeting will be in May, 2007, at AGI in Alexandria, VA.

Respectfully submitted, Lura E. Joseph

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF MIDWINTER ALA ACTIVITIES**

Despite the overcast and dampness, ALA attendees were undaunted by such climate condition with the final figure being 9,256 along with 2,974 exhibitors. I attended a number of ACRL Science & Technology Section programs, and among those included a hot topics discussion group entitled “The S word: taking the fear out of science reference”. The focus was on how sci-tech librarians can effectively mentor and train their non-science colleagues to handle such question without fear. There was considerable exchange among participants and presenters as to what works in their particular environments. Another session sponsored by the SPARC/ACRL Forum on Scholarly Communication entitled “public access: federal research access policies and how they’ll change your library”. The forum delved into examining current and emerging public access policies and exploring key questions facing libraries such as: how will scholarship and teaching be changed? What role do institutional repositories play? How can libraries best prepare for the transformation ahead? The gravity of this topic resonated with all present, and there was a continuation of this discussion at a later forum. Finally, the Publisher/Vendor Relations Discussion Group presented a panel of representatives from major publishers for an in-depth discussion of copyright agreements. Some specific areas that were covered included copyright transfer, modifying exclusive publisher licenses, Creative Commons licensing and the MIT copyright addendum. The sessions reflected a multitude of issues facing academic libraries, and illustrated the need for continuing communication and education among our libraries and their respective institutional administrations.

Respectfully submitted.

John H. Hunter, GSIS representative

## **WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF MAP LIBRARIES SPRING, 2007 MEETING.**

The Western Association of Map Libraries met in Pasadena at Cal Tech, with host Jim O’Donnell on February 15-18, 2007, and jointly with the California Map Society on February 17 at the Huntington Library for our Spring, 2007 meeting.

The WAML Executive Board awarded two plaques for Distinguished Service this Spring: 1) Cynthia Jahns, Head, Maps Unit, Science and Engineering Library, University of California, Santa Cruz, and, 2) Linda Zellmer, Head, Geology Library, Indiana University Libraries. In May, 2006, at the WAML Spring Conference in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, a Distinguished Service plaque was awarded to Julie Sweetkind-Singer, Head Librarian, Branner Earth Sciences Library & Map Collection, Stanford University.

Julie Sweetkind-Singer, chair of the Continuing Education Committee, led WAML in breakout discussion sessions for the following topics: 1) Grant writing, 2) Innovative ways to use students for library projects, 3) Map theft in a non special collections environment, 4) Map Discovery beyond the OPAC. We are gauging interest in having a

workshop on writing a grant.

Dr. Kerry Sieh, California Institute of Technology, gave a presentation on The Intersection of Burgeoning Human Population and Natural Hazards - the Case of Sumatra. We learned that in natural disasters, rich countries lose money, but poor countries lose people. He made a case for how richer countries can help save lives.

A member of both societies, WAML, and CMS, David Allen, Librarian Emeritus, SUNY at Stony Brook, demonstrated how to analyze maps with circles of discrepancy, in his presentation, The Comparative Analysis of Old Maps Using Digital Raster Imagery.

The WAML Executive Board has raised the question of how map related organizations can keep abreast of common concerns such as, 1) Consolidating digital map scanning registries and how one registry can be maintained into the future; 2) Scheduling and planning future "Maps in Transition" meetings; and 3) Planning meetings for map organization chairs to consider larger concerns.

WAML celebrates its 40th year at its Fall, 2007 meeting at the Denver Public Library, October 24-27, 2007, with Chris Thiry, Colorado School of Mines, hosting. This meeting is juxtaposed next to the GISIS meeting calendar such that you can come to Denver early and attend WAML before your GISIS meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendie Helms, GISIS representative

#### **PRESERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

*Note: This is the first in a series of reports by the Preservation Committee about preservation or digitization projects by GISIS members. Our first report is from Carolyn Laffoon, Purdue University.*

Digitization project - : Engineering Soils Map of Tippecanoe County, Indiana (1963)

This out-of-print map was being used for a 500 level class here but we only had one copy so I scanned it and our GIS Librarian added it to his server. I added the link to the EAS Library webpage so the map is now available to the world.

Here are the links: lower-resolution version (~2 MB) <http://www4.lib.purdue.edu/gis/production/engSoil.png>  
high resolution version (~60 MB) <http://www4.lib.purdue.edu/gis/production/engSoil.tif>

Additionally, Chris Miller, our GIS Librarian and I are planning to add to his server the *very first original aerial photos ever taken anywhere*: of the Wabash River Valley, 1929. We have 5 volumes of those aerial photos. Each volume is so big that it takes 2 people to lift it out of the map case drawer. Last summer, all the photos were scanned and burned onto CD's. Chris is in the process of adding them to his server. We are also in the process of having them cataloged. We had to request that the copy cataloger come over here as the volumes are too big to send to her for cataloging. Shortly, the entry should be in our public catalog. And, hopefully, within the next several months, we

should have public access once they are on Chris's server.

For more information, contact Carolyn at [carolyn@purdue.edu](mailto:carolyn@purdue.edu). Her library website is <http://www.lib.purdue.edu/eas/>.

#### **Call For Nominations: GISIS Officers**

The GISIS Nominations Committee invites you to submit names for Vice-President/President Elect and Treasurer. Holding an office in GISIS is a rewarding experience and a great way to make points with your boss or dean. If you are interested in serving or know of someone who is, please contact Adonna Fleming at [dfleming2@unl.edu](mailto:dfleming2@unl.edu) or 402-472-3920.

#### **Call for Nominations: Best Paper Award**

The Geoscience Information Society's Best Paper Award Committee is getting geared up. We welcome nominations from the GISIS membership for the Society's annual award for the best paper in geoscience information.

Papers published during 2006 (or with a 2006 imprint date) will be considered. Submissions will be evaluated using criteria including: significance, originality, professional competence, scholarship, and effectiveness of communication.

Committee members began evaluation of papers in late March. Please submit nominations by mail to: Rusty Kimball, Chair, GISIS Best Paper Award Committee, Texas A & M Evans Library, 5000 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-5000

You may also submit nominations by e-mail to: [rkimball@tamu.edu](mailto:rkimball@tamu.edu), or by FAX to: (979) 458-0112, ATTN: Rusty Kimball.

#### **Call for Nominations: Best Web Site Committee**

The Best Web Site Committee of GISIS is soliciting nominations for the Best Web Site related to Geosciences for 2007. Our committee will review the nominated web sites and select a winner to be announced and presented with an award at the GISIS meeting in Denver in October.

Please send in your suggestions for your favorite web site to [ear16@psulias.psu.edu](mailto:ear16@psulias.psu.edu).

*Criteria for Selection of the GISIS Outstanding Website Award*

The GISIS Website Advisory Committee will accept nominations for an annual Outstanding Geoscience Website Award. All sites related to the geological sciences are eligible. These include both scholarly sites and those geared toward the general public. In addition, both free and subscription-based will be considered though preference will be given to sites with significant free content.

The list of past winners is at: <http://www.geoinfo.org/bestwebsite.html>.

**GSA 2007 Annual Meeting**  
**Denver, Colorado**  
**October 28-31**  
**Earth Sciences for Society —**  
**Beginning of the International Year of Planet Earth**

## **NEW MEMBERS**

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

**DUANE BAYS**, Cartographic Technician, US Bureau of Land Management, Idaho State Office

**RICHARD HUFFINE**, National Library Coordinator, U.S. Geological Survey

**SARA LOREE**, Student, University of North Carolina

**JANA PEDERSEN**, GIS Specialist, ERO Resources

**BRUCE REID**, Head Librarian, Nesbitt Library at Penn State University at Wilkes Barre

**L. HARVEY THORLEIFSON**, Minnesota Geological Survey

**KATHLEEN WEESIES**, Geography/Maps/Geology Librarian, Michigan State University

## GSIS PUBLICATIONS LIST

**Proceedings of the Annual GSIS Meetings** (ISSN 0072-1409) \$45.00 each; standing orders are \$45.00/ year. (Proceedings volumes 1 through 25 are out of print and available from: Out-of-print Books on Demand, University Microfilms, Inc., 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.)

- v. 35, 2004, published 1005 *Geoinformatics*, ed. by L. R. Musser (ISBN 0-934485-37-2)
- v. 34, 2003 *Geoscience Information Horizons: Challenges, Choices, and Decisions*, ed. By L. E. Joseph. (ISBN 0-934485-36-4)
- v. 33, 2002 *New Heights in Geoscience Information: Access and Technology*, ed. by L. G. Dunn. (ISBN 0-934485-35-0)
- v. 32, 2001 *Geoscience Information: A Dynamic Odyssey*, ed. by M. M. Noga. (ISBN 0-934485-34-8)
- v. 31, 2000 *Electronic Information Summit: New Developments and their Impacts*, ed. by S. N. Tahirkheli. (ISBN 0-934485-33-X)
- v. 30, 2000 *Communication Divides: Perspectives on Supporting Information Bridges in the Geosciences*, ed. by Lois Heiser, (ISBN 0-934485-32-1)
- v. 29, 1999 *Accreting the Continent's Collections*, ed. by C. R. M. Derksen and C. J. Manson, (ISBN 0-934485-31-3)
- v. 28, 1998 *The Costs and Values of Geoscience Information*, ed. by C. J. Manson. (ISBN 0-934485-29-1)
- v. 27, 1997 *Expanding Boundaries: Geoscience Information for Earth System Science*, ed. by B. J. DeFelice. (ISBN 0-934485-23-2)
- v. 26, 1996 *Crossing the Bridge to the Future: Managing Geoscience Information in the Next Decade*, ed. by N. L. Blair. (ISBN 0-934485-26-7)

### **Proceedings of the International Geoscience Information Conferences**

- 6th, 1998 *Science Editing and Information Management*, Proceedings of the Second International AESE/ CBE/ EASE Joint Meeting, Sixth International Conference on Geoscience Information, and Thirty-second Annual Meeting, Association of Earth Science Editors, ed. by C. J. Manson. (ISBN 0-934485-30-5) \$ 25.00
- 5th, 1994 *Geoinfo V, Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Geoscience Information*, ed. by Jiri Hruska. (ISBN 0-934485-27-5) \$ 45.00 (2 vols.)

### **Directory of Geoscience Libraries, North America.**

5th Edition, 1997. (ISBN 0-934485-25-9) Paper. \$ 35.00

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---

Connie J. Manson  
2525 Sleater Kinney Road N.E.  
Olympia, WA 98506