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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Jan Heagy

Many thanks to these members who have volunteered GSIS positions:

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AGI GeoRef Advisory Committee –
Lura Joseph

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GSIS members are encouraged to contribute content for publication. Material for the June, 2010 issue should be received no later than May 31, 2010. Please send submissions by e-mail to jdombrow@uwyo.edu.

(continued from page 1)

AGI Government Affairs - Marie Dvorzak
AGI Member Society Council – Suzanne Larsen
ALA – John Hunter
CUAC - Clara McLeod and Linda Zellmer

If you are interested in active participation, GSIS has opportunities for the following committees and positions:

Best Paper Award – additional members
Information Resources – Chair and additional members
International Initiatives – additional members
Membership – Chair and additional members
Preservation – Chair and additional members
Publicity Officer

Please contact Jan Heagy (jan.b.heagy@exxonmobil.com) for more information about any of these opportunities. GSIS needs you!!!

VICE PRESIDENT’S COLUMN

By Kay G. Johnson

In 2004, *Geotimes* published a series on the closing of academic geological sciences departments, partly in response to the closures of the programs at the University of Connecticut and the University of Basel (Switzerland). The recent recession has hit a number of geology programs hard, including SUNY Albany (*Geotimes*, May 2007). The University of Florida Department of Geological Sciences was spared from budget cuts after the department, AGI, and other organizations lobbied hard to save the department, making national news in the

process. Despite national support of science and technology programs and concerns that the U.S. is lagging behind other countries in these areas, programs such as geology and physics are targeted by financially-strapped universities for closure because of low numbers of majors in these fields. Similarly, the corporate world is heavily affected by demand, supply, and profit margins. Geology research and exploration programs rise and fall at the whim of the economic market trends. It seems a distant memory that Texas Instruments started as a geotechnical company.

All organizations are subject to the economic market, including professional societies. The Geoscience Information Society is part of the trickle down process of economic effects from the government, universities, business and industry. None of this is news to any of you. All of us have been affected by the slowdowns in the economy and the effects at our workplaces. But, this, too, shall pass. The Geoscience Information Society is recession-proof in its membership, enthusiasm, and support. And we've got strong positives in our favor in that the geoscience community will always need information and support in accessing that information. Geology is a booming field in traditional areas, such as the oil industry, and in hot topics such as climate change, geobiology, environmental remediation, and alternative forms of energy.

I've been watching with interest the eruption of the Eyjafjallajokull volcano in Iceland. Here is yet another major geological disaster following the earthquakes in Haiti, Chile, and China. I can't even imagine the havoc caused if the volcano should erupt for a year. One volcano has stopped all traffic at the airports in Great Britain, Scandinavia,

and parts of France. Major evacuations took place in Iceland when the volcano melted the overlying glacier causing sea levels to rise. My heart goes out to all of the people hit hard by these recent geologic events. I have heard no mention of this in the news yet, but surely the Icelandic volcano has affected the respiratory health of millions of people. Geoscientists are studying all of the recent earthquakes and eruption and learning how to mitigate future events. They are essential personnel.

Geoscience Information Society members are actively helping those geoscientists with their research, teaching, and outreach. We are essential personnel. I have a very small role in providing geoscience information, but I am proud to be a member of such an illustrious group, and admire many of you who work on a daily basis assisting researchers, teachers, and students. The next time a major academic geology research program is in danger of closure, we can aid in rallying to the defense of the department by supplying the figures and facts that support why geoscientists and geoscience education are essential.

CALL FOR PAPERS

It's time to start thinking about this year's **GSA/GSIS Annual Meeting**, which will be held **October 31–November 3, 2010 in Denver**.

Our contribution to the technical program, **Topical Session no. 79, "Geoscience Information Services: 'Peak' Performances,"** is *very tentatively* scheduled for Tuesday morning. The description for this session reads, "Geoscience information providers apply their expertise to add value to

information and deliver exceptional services for library users in complex and diverse roles, such as consultation, contract negotiation, metadata description, instruction, and website development." The GSA Geoinformatics Division and National Association of Geoscience Teachers are co-sponsoring our session.

You may submit an abstract as either a poster or a talk, or both, for this session. If we have enough abstracts for more than one oral session, or , for an oral and a poster session, GSA will create those affiliated sessions. Submit your abstract online at <http://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2010AM/cfp.epl> . More information is posted at <http://www.geosociety.org/meetings/2010/techprog.htm>. Although the deadline for online submission of abstracts is not until August 10, please start thinking about participating now.

If you have questions, please contact Janet Dombrowski at jdombrow@uwyo.edu .

FIELD TRIP GUIDEBOOK NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

The **Guidebook Award Subcommittee is seeking nominations** for the 2010 Best Field Trip Guidebook Award to be presented at the GSA/GSIS meeting in Denver this fall. This year we are looking at geology field trip guidebooks "published" in 2008 or 2009.

Please send citations for the geologic guidebooks that you feel are most deserving of the honor. They should meet the *Guidelines for Authors, Editors, and Publishers of Geologic Field Trip*

(continued on page 7)

GEOREF ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GRAC) MEETING REPORT

October 21, 2009

Hilton Portland and Executive Tower
Portland, OR

Present: Harvey Cohen, Shaun Hardy, Lura Joseph, Afifa Kechrid, Suzanne Larsen, Jim O'Donnell, Sharon Tahirkheli, Dennis Trombatore (chair)

Budget

In 2009, AGI changed its fiscal year to begin in October, thus 2009 was shortened to nine months. This makes it difficult to compare with prior years, however, royalties appear to be comparable to previous years and GeoRef appears to have weathered the economic storm so far. No price increase was scheduled for 2010; however, a 5% price increase is in place for 2009.

Updates

Current Status – GeoRef Production

At the time of the October meeting, the end of the 2009 production year was near, and it appeared the number of total references produced would be close to the 100,000 mark. The last two years have exceeded 100,000, but the numbers were boosted by the absorption of the AESIS database. About 42% of the items in the current year will include abstracts; 10% of the items in GeoRef this year are freely available on the web and 25% have DOIs.

GeoRef Priority Journals List – New Candidates

The current GeoRef Priority Journals list does not contain any European Geophysical Union series. A recent press release presented information on impact factors for

their open access journals. After consideration of *Biogeosciences*, *Climate of the Past*, *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences*, and *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences*, the Committee decided to add *Climate of the Past* to the GeoRef Priority journal list.

CanGeoRef

The Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences (CFES) was scheduled to sign the CanGeoRef agreement at the Board meeting soon after the GRAC meeting. The agreement calls for CFES to assist AGI in the creation of an additional 2000 new Canadian references to GeoRef each year and the establishment of a new database devoted to Canadian geoscience publications.

Mineralogical Abstracts

At the time of the meeting, data from Mineralogical Abstracts for two years had been delivered, tested and loaded into a test file. The web site has been designed and the search and display screens are ready. The project was delayed because the conversion from print to online resulted in loss of the ability to display some characters dependably. Once the data are delivered, a MinAbs database will be made available online to Society members at no charge and the new items will be merged into GeoRef. GeoRef will also add abstracts and DOIs as identified for pre-existing items.

Vendors

Proquest – currently embedding Illustrata-like information among GeoRef search results.

Dialog – was purchased by Proquest but remains independent; loaded GeoRef on DataStar 10/09.

Ovid/SilverPlatter – continues to distribute the CD-ROM.

New Business

Lyell Collection: GeoRef received Lyell Collection metadata --there are about 4400 new items to add from earlier volumes of the Geological Society (London) publications.

Charleston Publishers Conference: GeoRef has been asked to participate in this year's annual Charleston Publisher's Conference. This conference pulls together librarians, publishers and vendors to discuss changes in the marketplace. GeoRef will participate on a panel of experts entitled 'Is Good Enough, Really Good Enough? Does algorithmic metadata search replace the need for discipline oriented databases?' GeoRef will be representing database producers.

Serials List: The GeoRef Serials List is currently available online as a pdf and is available in print for a fee. GeoRef has been receiving an ever-increasing number of requests for the file in Excel. The Committee discussed what should be included – title, former titles, ISSN, e-ISSN, volumes covered or dates of coverage? Should GeoRef charge for this file? Which journals are covered in their entirety? GeoRef staff will consider what options are feasible and report at the next meeting.

Serials and Archive linking: GeoRef has slowly been adding links to older materials, through DOIs and URLs. These links are displayed by vendors in different ways. The committee discussed what situations are being encountered and what GeoRef needs to do to be more useful— including what kind of URLs are reasonable to include (i.e. some versions of GeoRef include a URL for the journal home page, some URLs are just database queries, some require authentication by the user, and some are to content being

hosted by third parties).

Publisher relations: Agreements have been signed with Springer (65 journals), Wiley/Blackwell (45 journals), IOP (8 journals) and AGU (16 journals) to obtain metadata on an ongoing basis. The agreements all allow inclusion of abstracts in GeoRef with appropriate credit.

Open-Access Publications and Institutional Repositories: The GeoRef Open-Access list has been growing slowly and now numbers about 100 journals and series. The definition that is being used for Open-Access includes allowing the current issues to be open (this restriction limits the list somewhat) and requires at least two years of content be available. With a little effort, the list could be expanded to contain the report series for all of the state and provincial surveys, as well as more conference proceedings, but time has not permitted this to date. Institutional Repositories have grown since the last GRAC meeting, and several state surveys are now depositing their publications in IRs (i.e. Nebraska) The Committee recommended that GeoRef continue to pursue Open-Access materials. The Committee was reluctant to recommend additional examination of institutional repositories as they are so variable.

The next meeting will be April 19, 2010 at GeoRef headquarters in Alexandria, VA.

Respectfully submitted,
Lura Joseph, GSIS Representative to GRAC

MEMBER NEWS

Lisa Johnston has been invited to be an at-large member of the organizing committee for the GSA Annual Meeting that will bring 6000 geologists to Minneapolis in October 2011.

Kudos to **Ellie Clement** and **Claudette Cloutier** on the publication of GSIS Proceedings volume 38, 2007, "Geoscience Information: Making the Earth Sciences Accessible for Everyone."

Long-time Geosciences Librarian for Princeton University, **Patty Gaspari-Bridges**, has moved up to Firestone Library where she is an Assistant University Librarian for Collection Development. New GSIS member **Louise Deis** reports that she will "try to fill her shoes" as the Geosciences Librarian for Princeton (even though my title still is Science & Technology Reference Librarian). Welcome to GSIS Louise! **Wangyal Shawa** is the Map and GIS Librarian.

AGI MEMBER SOCIETY COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, April 12, 2010
Marriott Hotel, New Orleans, LA

By Jan Heagy

This meeting was held in conjunction with the annual American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) conference.

Sharon Tahirkheli's presentation on open access provided an excellent overview of issues. See *Updates on Open Access Plans* (1/10) at <http://www.agiweb.org/gap/legis111/data.html> for details. Currently there is no clarity on copyright, economic

models, or the timing of US government open access initiatives.

AGI is considering holding a virtual workshop on how open access could work. Sharon asked the audience to send her their suggestions for workshop content.

There was also an interesting discussion on the topic of Societies and Economic Realities & Best Practices. Sub-topics included:

- Student-Graduate Student Membership Gap
- Foundation Interaction
- Aging Membership
- Successes in Today's Economic Environment

I took away some ideas for ways to develop society membership. Here are a few:

- Offering new graduates a free year as a graduation gift
- Promote AGI member society status as a part of GSIS membership
- Plan meeting programs with broad appeal
- Offer online access to publications
- Offer online learning opportunities

The next AGI Member Society Council meeting will be held on Monday, November 1, 2010 in Denver, Colorado.

(Nominations, continued from page 4)

Guidebooks published by GSIS at <http://www.geoinfo.org/GuidebookGuidelines.pdf>. A list of previous winners can be found online at <http://www.geoinfo.org/bestguid.html>.

Send your nominations to Erin Palmer, Chair, Guidebook Awards Subcommittee at erin_palmer@gov.nt.ca as soon as possible but **no later than May 9, 2010**.

Literature Reviews



Carol J. La Russa

Mikki, Susanne. (2010). "Comparing Google Scholar and ISI Web of Science for Earth Sciences," *Scientometrics*, 82(2), 321-331.

To study the coverage overlap of Google Scholar and ISI Web of Science (WoS) for the earth sciences, Mikki performed separate searches in both databases for twenty-nine authors (primarily researchers from the University of Bergen who study climate issues and petroleum geology). She found a total of 1,573 items in WoS and 2,766 items in Google Scholar that were marked "book," "pdf," or "citation." Comparing the two results sets she found that four percent of the items were unique to WoS. Sixty-nine percent of the items were found only in the Google Scholar set. She examined 107 of these items and found them to be articles in journals not covered by WoS, conference proceedings, books and book chapters, reports, and bibliographically unidentifiable items. The author also chose one author and looked at the citation counts generated from both sources. Similar citation counts were found for both WoS and Google Scholar.

Foote, Jody Bales. (2010). "State Geological Survey Libraries: A Disparity in Resources, Services, Access, and Professionalism," *Science & Technology Libraries*, 29(1), 53-68. DOI:10.1080/01942620903579385

The author conducted a telephone census of the forty-seven existing state geological surveys concerning their libraries. The

survey included twenty-two questions and was conducted in summer 2008. There are two broad categories of survey libraries: those administered by their state survey (79%) and those administered by university library systems (21%). Fifty-five percent are funded by their state survey, twenty-one percent by a university library system, seven percent receive no funding, and eight percent receive funding from other sources. All university-administered libraries are open to the public with no restrictions as are sixty-five percent of survey administered-libraries. Seven percent of survey-administered libraries are not open to the public. Only thirty-four percent of state survey libraries are staffed by someone with a degree in library or information science; professional geologists staff fifteen percent. Collection sizes range from 250 volumes to more than 150,000 volumes. Respondents noted the decline of exchange agreements in recent years. One third of the respondents said the Internet has had a negative impact on the library. Some libraries have taken advantage of the Internet by placing their holdings online and by being linked from the survey home page.

Nine of the state survey-administered libraries are noted as providing more extensive services than the others. These services include regular public access, reference services to all, cataloged collections, photocopying, printing, scanning, interlibrary loan, large collections of monographs, professional librarians or other knowledgeable staff, and a link to the library from the first page of their survey's web site. Other survey-administered libraries have small collections and few resources for maintaining or adding materials. The ten university-administered libraries receive

stable funding and benefit from their association with a university library system providing coordination of collection development, acquisitions, cataloging, and interlibrary loan. However, none of these state surveys has a link from their front page to the university library that serves them.

The author concludes that if smaller geological survey libraries are to remain viable their organizations need to make them a higher priority with designated staffing and procedures for inventory, cataloging, circulation, acquisitions, digitization, and creation of a web site. Another option would be to merge with a university library system.

Head, Alison J. and Michael B. Eisenberg. (2010). "How Today's College Students Use *Wikipedia* for Course-Related Research," *First Monday*, 15(3).
<http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/2830/2476>

The authors report on their study of undergraduate use of *Wikipedia*. Their research methods included student focus groups and a survey sent to 27,666 students the spring of 2009 which yielded 2,318 responses. The students were sophomores, juniors, and seniors from all types of colleges and universities and represented all major disciplinary areas. The authors' results indicate that most students use *Wikipedia*; students use it as a summary and introduction to get started on their research; and that students in architecture, engineering, and the sciences are more likely to use it. Students find *Wikipedia* especially useful when formulating their research topics. Students seem to recognize that it is not an authoritative source. When obtaining background information for a topic, in

decreasing order of probability, students use: course readings, Google, scholarly research databases, OPACs, instructors, *Wikipedia*, government web sites, classmates, personal collections, library shelves, encyclopedias (print or online), friends, other search engines, librarians, and blogs. The authors conclude that the advantages (especially currency) of *Wikipedia* outweigh its weaknesses and that students, "appear to negotiate the accuracy of *Wikipedia* content, rather than assume it."

Meier, John J. (2010). "Are Today's Science and Technology Librarians Being Overtasked? An Analysis of Job Responsibilities in Recent Advertisements on the ALA JobLIST Web site," *Science & Technology Libraries*, 29(1), 165-175.
DOI:10.1080/01942620903579443
URL:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01942620903579443>

Meier asks whether the number of tasks required of science and technology librarians is increasing over time. As a source of data, he uses the ALA JobLIST web site, which includes postings from *American Libraries* and *College and Research Libraries*. Postings for positions with a liaison or collection development responsibility in science or technology were selected for this study. Thirty openings from 2008 and twenty-five from 2009 met this criteria. The average number of job responsibilities per advertisement was sixteen for both 2008 and 2009 but the median was 14.5 for 2008 and 16 for 2009. New job titles like "Cheminformatics Librarian" and "Emerging Technologies Librarian" in these ads seem to suggest changing, or more complex, job responsibilities when compared with

traditional job titles like "Reference Librarian." The author concludes that the number of sci-tech librarian jobs offered is decreasing while number of responsibilities per job is increasing.

Arendt, Julie. (2010). "Are Article Influence Scores Comparable across Scientific Fields?," *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship*, Winter 2010.

URL: <http://www.istl.org/10-winter/refereed2.html>

In this article Arendt examines whether Article Influence Scores found in Science Journal Citation Reports ® (JCR) are comparable across different fields of research. Impact Factors (computed by taking the number of citations the journal received in a given year to articles published in the preceding two years and dividing it by the number of substantive articles from those two years) are not useful for comparing different fields of study. Applied fields like nursing (2.22) have low Impact Factors while fields like cell biology (31.92) have very high scores. These differences have been attributed to variations in the average number of citations per paper between fields, variations in the amount of time between publication and citation of articles, differences in interdisciplinarity, and uneven coverages of fields in JCR.

Article Influence Scores are computed by a more complicated process than Impact Factors. Eigenfactor scores are computed using five years worth of articles and involve weighting methods. These scores are divided by the number of articles and then the resulting number is scaled so the mean Article Influence Score for all journals in the

database is 1.00.

The author collected data from the 2007 JCR Science Edition. For each of the 172 science fields listed she recorded the field's median Impact Factor, median Article Influence Score, highest Impact Factor, and highest Article Influence Score. Median values were collected because Impact Factors tend to be skewed. She found that median Impact Factors and median Article Influence Scores are strongly positively correlated (Pearson's $r(172)=0.773$, $p<.001$). The relationship between field's highest Impact Factor and field's highest Influence Score is also strongly positively correlated (Pearson's $r(191)=0.931$, $p<.001$). She concludes that the corrective methods used by the calculation methods for Article Influence Scores reduce, but do not eliminate, the difference between academic fields. Fields with higher Impact Factor scores also tend to have higher Article Influence Scores. The correlation may represent real differences in the impacts of different fields, but it may also represent how inter-connected a field is within the citation network of JCR. The Article Influence Score also does not correct for a field's use of literature not covered by JCR. The author concludes that Article Influence Scores are not useful for comparisons between fields although they may be useful for comparisons within a field.

King, Donald W. (2010). "An Approach to Open Access Author Payment," *D-Lib Magazine*, 16(3/4).

URL: <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/march10/king/03king.html>

DOI:10.1045/march2010-king

In this opinion column, King argues that the

federal government should pay open access fees for all articles authored by U.S. scientists. Open access articles are very desirable because the current subscription model depresses article use among many who need them, including scientists who are self-employed or who work for small companies, non-research oriented colleges, etc. Objections to author-payment revolve around the amount of fees, who pays the fees, timing of payment of fees, and the fairness of not requiring payment (subscription cost) from non-authors who only use the articles (and who do not contribute resources for their creation). Using an estimate of 285,000 science articles published in 2008 by U.S. authors and assuming an author fee of \$1,500 per article, King calculates that it would have cost \$427.5 million to provide open access to all. A \$2,500 fee to authors would have required \$712.5 million. These amounts represent, respectively, .76 and 1.27 percent of total R&D spendings.

Costs for the entire journal system are estimated to be allocated as follows: authors (12%), donated time of reviewers and editors (3%), publishers (9%), libraries and intermediaries (not including subscription costs) (11%), and readers (65%). He estimates these costs are around \$29 billion annually. Scientists would save money by not having to subscribe to journals and by not having to spend time and money locating non-subscribed journal articles. He assumes most library subscriptions would be cancelled and that this would save \$330 per title per library for print/online subscriptions, \$220 for print only, and \$170 for online only. In the U.S., with 3,772 academic libraries averaging 3,690 science journals (1,950 print, 1,740 electronic) and 4,100 science-oriented special libraries averaging 560 science

journals, there are a total of 2.3 million subscriptions. If these subscriptions were cancelled, King estimates the annual savings to libraries could be as much as \$4.1 billion. Publishers would save on the costs of maintaining subscription systems but might develop cash flow problems because payment would come after first copy costs are incurred. Other issues include the future of journal "brands" and how access should be achieved (through libraries, publishers, or repositories).

Lok, Corie. (2010). "Literature Mining: Speed Reading," *Nature*, 463(7280), 416-418.

Scientists are starting to use automated tools to help them find relevant articles, to discover gaps, and to generate and test new hypotheses. SWAN (Semantic Web Applications in Neuromedicine) is a curated and browseable online repository for Alzheimer's disease research hypotheses. SWAN provides visual, color-coded, displays showing the relationships between hypotheses, including which hypotheses conflict. Another tool is Reflect, which is being piloted in two online issues of *Cell*. Reflect allows users to click on highlighted key "entities" to get to detailed information such as gene structures. The entity recognition is achieved using data mining software. Problems for the curated approach include scalability because of the need for manual curation. The process is unlikely to be fully automated. A combination of automated tools, professional curators, and papers' authors will be needed. Other issues for developers are transparency, provenance, and trust.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Proceedings of the Annual GISIS Meetings
(ISSN 0072-1409)
\$45.00 each; standing orders are \$45.00/year.

-v. 39, 2008 [published 2009], Libraries in Transformation: Exploring Topics of Changing Practices and New Technologies, ed. Lisa Johnston [978-0-934485-67-8]

-v. 38, 2007 [published 2010], Geoscience Information: Making the Earth Sciences Accessible for Everyone; ed. by Claudette Cloutier.

-v. 37, 2006 [published 2008], Geoscience Information: Keys to Discovery, ed. P.B. Yocum [978-0-934485-68-5]

-v. 36, 2005, [published 2007], Collaboration for the Dissemination of Geologic Information Among Colleagues, ed. by A. Fleming [0-934485-38-0]

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