Sedimentary Geology Division

GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to this issue of the newsletter of the Sedimentary Geology Division of GSA! As your new chair, I'd like to first tell you a little bit about myself, and then tell you more about what the Division currently does. Finally, I'll ask for your input on what the Division could (or should) be doing for you, the membership.

My research focuses on reconstructions of past climates and landscapes using fossil soils, or paleosols. Although I was classically trained as a terrigenous clastic sedimentologist, I decided to "retool" and redirect my emphasis towards "Paleopedology" (the study of fossil soils) in 1989. My studies of paleosols and modern soil analogs known as Vertisols (high clay content soils with a high shrink-swell potential that form in areas of seasonal precipitation and/or seasonal soil moisture deficit) include sites in Texas and the Appalachian Basin, Costa Rica, Kenya and Tanzania. I also conduct "Environmental Sedimentology" research emphasizing the interpretation of weathering processes in C Horizon (saprolite) material in the southeastern U.S., and focusing especially on how pore structure affects hydraulic conductivity.

The Sedimentary Geology Division exists to bring together GSA members interested in the broad field of sedimentary geology. It does this through sponsorship of events at the GSA Annual Meeting, as well as by building a sense of community through a gathering at the meeting, a newsletter, and a Web site. Students come into this community through workshop subsidies and field trips, and through the annual Student Research Award. The vitality and energy of the Sedimentary Geology Division are determined by the enthusiastic participation and creativity of its members. Membership in the Division, the fourth largest of GSA's 13 divisions, averages about 700-900 members.

The Division instituted the Laurence L. Sloss Award for Sedimentary Geology in 1999. Our first three awardees, Bill Dickinson, George Klein and Bob Dott, represent years of scientific achievement and service to GSA. The Sloss Award and the Student Research Award are presented at the Division Business Meeting and Awards Ceremony held each year at the GSA Annual Meeting. The most important development for the Division last year and continuing this year is the merging of interests and activities of the Division with GSA's newest Affiliated Society, the Society for Sedimentary Geology (SEPM). The Division and SEPM have agreed to invite each other's officers to attend their

Message from the Chair continued…

governing board meetings, and to encourage cooperation wherever possible. The most obvious modes of spring cooperation are co-sponsorship of sessions, short courses and fieldtrips at meetings, and encouragement of members (especially students) to join the other society. A large percentage of Division members are already SEPM members, so cooperation is a win-win situation. For information on how to join the Division, please contact the Secretary-Treasurer at the address listed below.

Sedimentary geology has always been an integral part of GSA. As the field changes and grows, the Sedimentary Geology Division will strive to support the efforts of all its members, especially students. Our biggest immediate needs as a Division involve active participation by YOU! Mariana Rhoades, our Newsletter Editor, is always seeking good contributions to the Newsletter. Encourage students and professionals to join the Division; the more members, the more dues, the more money, the more awards, etc. Volunteer to participate on committees. Please join us at our next Annual Meeting, and come to the Business Meeting and Awards Ceremony. Nominate distinguished sedimentary geologists for the Sloss Award.

My final words as Chair are worth emphasizing. Become involved. Tell us what we can do to be more relevant and useful for you, the membership. The Division is only as strong and as active as its members. Contact me or other members of the Management Board. Be an active Sedimentary Geologist!

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ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

Ray Ingersoll, Past Chair,ringer@ess.ucla.edu

The 2001 Annual Meeting in Boston included many Division activities. We sponsored technical sessions on Recent Advances in Deep-Water Facies Models; Applications of Sedimentology and Geophysics in Hydrogeology; Dynamics of Sediments and Sedimentary Environments: A Session in Honor of John B. Southard; Coastal Geology of the National Parks; New Insights into Late Ordovician Climate, Oceanography, and Tectonics; Geochemistry of Siliciclastic Materials: Provenance, Paleoclimates, and Plate Tectonic Settings; Linking Sediment Dynamics and Stratigraphy in Modern-Holocene Estuaries; and The Margins of Reefs and Carbonate Platforms. Many of these sessions were cosponsored by our Associated Society SEPM (Society for Sedimentary Geology).
Forging stronger ties between SGD and SEPM continued in Boston, as officers from each group attended the other group's governing-board meetings. We will continue to work with SEPM leadership to strengthen both groups and their activities.

Following a morning meeting of SGD's Management Board, the festivities began Tuesday evening at the Business Meeting and Awards Ceremony. Raffle tickets were sold, drinks flowed, and goodies were consumed as the crowd gathered. Members of the Management Board, standing committees, adhoc committees, and SEPM representatives were introduced and thanked for their continued contributions to the Division. Secretary/Treasurer Paul Link assured us that the Division is in sound financial shape.

Dag Nummedal, President of SEPM, encouraged us to examine additional ways to integrate SGD and SEPM.
Grant Yip, graduate student at UC Santa Barbara, received the Student Research Award for his proposal to study submarine slump deposits at the K-T boundary in Baja California. His advisor Cathy Busby accepted the award on his behalf.

The highlight of the evening occurred with presentation of the Lawrence L. Sloss Award for Sedimentary Geology to Robert H. Dott, Jr. Citationist Charlie Byers summarized Bob's many contributions to science, education and GSA [see website for photos of this event:**http://rock/geosociety/org/sed/SGD.html**]. Bob responded with warm recollections of his many years of interaction with Larry Sloss, and his colleagues at the University of Wisconsin. The evening concluded with our annual raffle, during which many books, shirts and other useful items were dispensed. Additional consumption of food and drink followed. Hope to see you in Denver next year!

GSA DIVISIONS CHAIR MEETING, Boulder, Colo. 02/23/02

Paul K Link, Treasurer, Sedimentary Geology Division, substituting for Steve Driese

I think we all realize that these are difficult times. It is interesting how national events and trends in geoscience eventually percolate down to the local level. The purpose of professional organization like GSA, and of its smaller divisions, like the Sedimentary Geology Division, is to carry us as colleagues, through both the good times and the bad. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Our Society is financially in trouble. The main message from the Division Chairs meeting was that GSA will need to cut its operating budget this year by 10%. GSA management feels it is important that our members realize both the extent of the problem and the importance of everyone helping work our way through it.

The biggest source in come to GSA is publication sales, mainly as library subscriptions. As we enter the era of electronic publishing, this situation is precarious. A big subject of the meeting in Boulder was the future of information, accessibility and sharing.

National GSA Meetings are designed to make money. The Boston Meeting had 1000 fewer attendees than planned, and GSA's budget felt the pinch.

Overall, GSA membership has been growing, though retention of young members as they enter mid career is a problem.

The Sedimentary Geology Division is a large and rather loose group of about 750 members. Our affiliation with SEPM acknowledges the parallel interests of many of our members.

Many GSA member do not realize the important role taken by the Divisions in creating the program for the Annual Meetings. Our representatives on the Joint Technical Program Committee (presently Kate Giles and Maya Elrick) have great responsibility (and opportunity) to shape how the Annual Meeting is organized. But more importantly, Division are the source of most of the Symposia and Topical Sessions at a National GSA Meeting. Members are strongly encourage to become advocates for their areas of interest and to use the GSA structure to disseminate information and emphasize the parts of Geoscience about which they are excited.

Your Sedimentary Geology Division Board welcomes all participation in our events at the Denver meeting. Further, it is time to plan for Seattle in 2003.

GSA 2001 MEETING: A COLLECTION OF PAPER SUMMARIES

Pardee Keynote Symposium Boston 2001

Geobiology: Applications to Sedimentary Geology

During the 1970s and 80s, Earth scientists made great strides by applying the principles of chemistry and physics to the study of geological pattern and process. As we enter a new century, the Earth sciences are again being invigorated by insights drawn from other disciplines. This time, the principal infusion comes from biology, and it is sedimentary geology and Earth system science, not mantle dynamics, that will benefit most. The Pardee Keynote Symposium *Geobiology: Applications to Sedimentary Geology*, convened at the 2001 Annual Meeting of the Geological Society of America in Boston provided an opportunity for sedimentary geologists to see where geobiological research is heading.

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Andrew H. Knoll, Harvard University, aknoll@harvard.edu

T16: Technical Session: Insects and Terrestrial Arthropods: Are So Many Really Represented by So Few?

The theme of this Paleontological Society-sponsored session at the Boston GSA meeting grew out of a perceived dearth of active research into terrestrial arthropod faunas and communities. It turned out that there is significant research being done, but in diverse parts of the world and by people not all aware of each other's ongoing studies. Bob Nelson led off the talks with a report of as-yet-unidentified arthropod remains recovered from early Middle Devonian nonmarine rocks in Maine. Cary Easterday then discussed an amazing fauna of Pennsylvanian age from

T26: continued….

Ohio (including a giant cockroach), and Jorge Santiago-Blay presented two new fossil scorpions from the Tertiary of Mexico and the Cretaceous of Brazil. Steve Hasiotis pointed out the excellent but oft-unrecognized trace fossil record that arthropods have left. Conrad Labandeira discussed the large aquatic Sundance insect fauna of Jurassic age from Montana, as well as the terminal Cretaceous devastation of plant-insect interactions, in a pair of talks. Tony Martin followed with a spirited presentation on evidence for insect-on-insect parisitoid evidence from Cretaceous rocks in Montana, while Sara Lubkin presented preliminary results of her study on Cretaceous insects from New Jersey.

Dena Smith talked about the bias introduced into fossil faunas by the very nature of depositional environments, and Jorge Santiago-Blay stood in for co-author Patrick Craig in discussing an early Miocene amber fauna in Mexico. The final talk was presented by Allan Ashworth on forest-associated Pliocene coleoptera from Antarctica.

Amanda Ash also presented a fascinating talk on an early Cretaceous assemblage from Mongolia, but in a general paleontology session on Thursday morning.

A follow-up session, T77, is scheduled for the 2002 Annual Meeting in Denver, and is also sponsored by the Paleontological Society. Both posters and oral presentations are to be solicited.

Robert E. Nelson, Colby College, renelson@colby.edu

T26: Geochemistry of Organic-rich Sediments from Estuaries, Continental Shelves, Basins, Upwelling Zones

The session served as a modern environments companion to a successful AM/PM black shale session chaired by Jeff Over and Frank Ettensohn the day before. Ten presentations covered a range of topics in environments including Chesapeake Bay, Massachusetts bays, Baja California, the Gulf of Mexico, the Mediterranean Sea, the South China Sea, the Arabian Sea, and the Cariaco Basin. Speakers discussed the following tools, techniques and geochemical systems: pore-water gel probes, redox-sensitive trace metals, biomarker isotopes, nitrogen isotopes, sediment traps and cores, and core spectrophotometry. Cycling of N, C, and especially S in sediments, bottom waters, and the middle and upper water column was discussed by several of the presenters. Constraining sedimentation rates, climate, and productivity was shown to be essential to understanding geochemical fluxes in these environments. The beginnings of a lively debate on the mechanism of molybdenum enrichment in anoxic sediments (water-column scavenging versus sediment authigenesis) had to be cut short due to time constraints; Much of the material presented is either recently published or in press in a variety of journals. Abstracts from the session can be viewed at: http://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2001AM/finalprogram/session_762.htm

John Bratton, USGS, jbratton@usgs.gov, Jennifer Morford, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

T33: Coastal Erosion Programs: Collaborative Geologic Research in Action

The session was one in a series of coastal-related topics that kept researchers dealing with coastal issues busy throughout the conference. The objective of the session was to report on the variety of Coastal Erosion Programs being conducted around the United States as well as getting coastal researchers together. Geographically the talks started in the west and moved eastward; the first talk dealt with coastal erosion problems in Hawaii, and then moved to the West Coast (Washington, Oregon), onto the Gulf Coast, and ended up along the East Coast. The papers presented dealt with a variety of datasets including onshore to offshore surface and subsurface mapping (e.g. bathymetry, GPS, Lidar, GPR, sedimentation patterns, coring, etc), sand dune stratigraphy and correlation, and coastal modeling to evaluate coastal susceptibility. The goals of many of these Coastal Erosion Programs are to provide solid technical data and analysis about the local and regional coastal systems to local communities and agencies who, armed with the information, can tackle land use decisions with a regional perspective. Another of the objectives of the session was to have researchers from the US Geological Survey, State Agencies (Environment, Geological), Universities, consulting firms and local communities come together to look at how different collaborative groups solve their problems. A total of thirteen talks were presented with four of them from invited speakers who highlighted recent coastal erosion programs (two with universities -Fletcher and Stanley and two with the USGS - Gelfenbaum and Thieler). The session was well attended and, as several people noted, a variety of interesting topics and techniques were covered.

Harry Jol, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, jolhm@uwe.edu,
Sandy VaderBurgh, University College of the Fraser Valley

T65. Erosion of non-lithified sediments, observations and models from millimeter to hillslope scales

Recent developments in digital data collection, instrumentation and proliferation of high end personal computers warrant a broad review of the state of the art field instrumentation and modeling of surface erosion. A recently established cosmogenic surface exposure dating has also provided a wealth of data on erosion rates. The session was a success and brought together earth scientists from different fields to share and compare results on observing and modeling soil erosion and transportation in varying spatial and temporal scales. Most of the reported research can be found published in peer reviewed journals by the authors listed below. The direct contact information can be found in 2001 GSA Annual meeting program or by contacting GSA headquarters.

Tom Hanks reviewed the classical diffusion models for hillslope analysis, that are still widely used to predict the hillslope form evolution through time or to invert the elapsed time since a surface deformation like fault rupture occurred. The degree and type of geochemical soil profile development on a hillslope has been shown to correlate with the stability and age of the surface, the weathering profile is also a complex function of erosion, deposition, climate and vegetation (B. Harrison). R. Iverson presented his award winning work on experimental debris flows. Based on his analysis he developed a new, two-phase model that de-emphasizes rheology and establishes clear mechanical connections between debris flows and rock avalanches and flash floods. J. Putkonen showed how all published exposure age dated moraine boulders collectively attest to the slow degradation of the glacial moraines, which in turn confounds the attempts to date glacial moraines by cosmogenic exposure age dating of a small number of surface boulders. The long term basin wide erosion rates were shown by A.Gellis to be order of magnitude smaller than the largest short term erosion rates in the small catchment in New Mexico, raising the question of human influence on modern erosion rates. G. Matisoff reported on successfully following tagged soil particles on the hillslope to calculate soil erosion and transportation rates. J. Shroeder showed his results on the assessment of the types, locations, and degrees of soil erosion in the former Armstrong Gunnery Range, SD as a part of environmental cleanup.

Jaakko Putkonen, University of Washington, putkonen@u.washington.edu

ANNOUNCEMENTS OF INTEREST

Late Paleozoic Tectonics and Hydrocarbon Systems of Western North America—
The Greater Ancestral Rocky Mountains

The AAPG Research Committee has approved a Hedberg Research Conference for July 21-26, 2002, titled "Late Paleozoic Tectonics and Hydrocarbon Systems of Western North America – The Greater Ancestral Rocky Mountains." Conveners for the conference are Chuck Kluth (Chevron-Texaco;cklu@chevrontexaco.com), Lynn Soreghan (University of Oklahoma;lsoreg@ou.edu), Walt Snyder (Boise State University; wsnyder@boisestate.edu), Tim Lawton (New Mexico State University;tlawton@nmse.edu), and Dave Barbeau (University ofArizona;dbarbeau@geo.arizona.edu).

The purpose of this research conference is to provide a framework for exchange and advance of ideas and interpretations that will lead to a better assessment of the Late Paleozoic Ancestral Rocky Mountains, including associated hydrocarbon systems. It is our hope that ideas discussed in this meeting will advance our understanding of all aspects of this system, and that lessons learned can be applied in other intraplate areas. We are aiming the content of our meeting at the very broadly defined Late Mississippian to Early Permian tectonics and hydrocarbon system features. For instance, we intend to include discussion of related features from the mid-continent and northern South America, in addition to western North America. The conference will bring together workers from various regions and disciplines (geology, geophysics, reservoir engineering, etc.) to discuss state-of-the-art concepts, methodologies, case histories, and future directions relating to this subject. The conference will be held in an informal setting (Vail, Colorado) with a maximum of 80-100 attendees. The format will be a 5-day meeting in which the sessions will consist of both oral presentations and posters, organized by themes that represent significant areas of uncertainty in the regional interpretations.

A preliminary list of themes and topics is given below. This format, we have found, is useful for encouraging in-depth discussion and exploration of ideas presented, as well as of related topics that arise. There will also be one or two field trips included as part of the meeting.

Paleozoic Tectonics continued…

Key topics to be discussed include: Structural geometry and structural relief; Sedimentation and stratigraphic- and basin-architecture; Timing and rates of tectonic processes; Hydrocarbon systems and paleoclimate; and Regional Syntheses and Plate Tectonic Models.

At this time, we are soliciting presentations of results of work in this field. Acceptance of a contribution is not guaranteed, for as mentioned above, the conference attendance and presentations will be limited in order to provide an atmosphere most conducive to advancing knowledge in the focus areas. The program will be fashioned around those themes that attract the most interest from contributors.

If you are interested in this meeting, please consider completing a questionnaire, available from Ms. Debbi Boonstra (AAPG Education Department, PO Box 979 Tulsa, OK 74101-0979; debbi@aapg.org). Additionally, an abstract cover sheet with details on length and formatting instructions may be obtained by contacting Ms. Boonstra. We encourage presentation of work that is in progress and/or that may not yet be ready for wide dissemination. At the same time, we are leaving open the possibility for compiling some contributions into a conference volume, if enough desire to do this is demonstrated. The deadline for preliminary abstracts is May 1, 2002. Please send your extended abstract to Debbi Boonstra at AAPG Education Department using the address on the enclosed form, as well as a copy to Chuck Kluth at Chevron-Texaco.

SGD and SEPM begin Cooperative Activities

Shared Technical Program

When SEPM - Society for Sedimentary Geology became an official associated society of GSA, its first goal was to become more involved with the Technical Program. Since there is a large overlap in the membership of SGD-Sedimentary Geology Division and SEPM, it was an obvious choice to begin co-sponsoring technical sessions and to use both our organizations to continuously improve the sedimentary sessions and activities at GSA. In a similar situation, SGD input and co-sponsorship will become part of the efforts at the AAPG/SEPM annual meeting each spring. This type of cooperation can only lead to improved activities across all areas of sedimentary geology.

SEPM Research Conference: Incised Valleys:

Images and Processes Casper and Newcastle, Wyoming, August 18-23, 2002

Incised-valley deposits are commonly of economic significance because they contain hydrocarbons or act as groundwater aquifers. However, such deposits are generally narrow and architecturally complex. As a result, exploration for and development of them is difficult. Over the last decade, a large body of work has been done on incised valleys, providing important new insights into the factors that govern their location and the stratigraphic organization of their fill. In response to the continuing interest in incised valleys this research conference proposes to bring together a group of active researchers to discuss and examine in the field the origin, geomorphology, facies and stratigraphic organization of incised valley deposits of all ages. If interested, go the SEPM website (www.sepm.org) and check out the events section.

Howard E. Harper, Jr., Executive Director, SEPM; hharper@sepm.org

New Stratigraphic Column for Michigan

In December of 2000, the Michigan Geological Survey adopted an update of their standard stratigraphic column (Michigan Geological Survey, 1964). This new column (Catacosinos and others, 2000) is included in the Surveys' Bulletin 8 (Catacosinos and others, 2001), an update of the stratigraphic terms used in Michigan since the last comprehensive stratigraphic compilation by Martin and Straight (1956). Publication 8 and the new 17" by 22" color column may be obtained at a very reasonable cost from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Geological Survey Division, P.O. Box 30256, Lansing, Michigan, (517) 334-6943. This update should be useful to workers and students involved in basin analysis, regional correlation and the oil and gas industry. Geological Departments in and around the Great Lakes should be aware of this resource.

Paul A. Catacosinos, paulcat@attglobal.net

Vadose Zone Journal

The Soil Science Society of America is publishing a new journal this fall, called Vadose Zone Journal. Please contact Keith Schlesinger, kschlesinger@agronomy.org for information.

GSA Meeting 2002 Announcements

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Understanding Soil and Vadose Zone Hydrology of Saprolite: Integration of Hydrogeology, Sedimentology, Geomorphology, Pedology and Biology; Topical Session for 2002 GSA Meeting Convenors: Steven G. Driese (sdriese@utk.edu) and Larry D. McKay, Department of Geological Sciences, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

The oral session includes integration of hydrology, sedimentology, geomorphology, pedology, and biology towards understanding the origin and development of porosity in saprolite and in influence on soil and vadose zone hydrology and chemistry. Invited speakers include: Bob Graham, Pedologist at UC-Riverside; Daniel Richter, Soil Biologist at Duke University; Bill Sanford, Hydrogeologist at Colorado State University; and Phil Schoeneberger, Pedologist at the National Soil Center Laboratory. Volunteered abstracts are encouraged.

Sponsors: GSA Hydrogeology Division, GSA Sedimentary Geology Division; Society for Sedimentary Geology (SEPM); GSA Quaternary Geology and Geomorphology.

Impact Stratigraphy Topical Session for 2002 GSA Meeting

David T. King, Jr., Dept. Geology, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849, kingdat @ auburn.edu
Michael R. Rampino of New York University and I have proposed a topical session for the 2002 GSA meeting in Denver titled “Impact stratigraphy.” This topical session has the sponsorship of both the Sedimentary Geology Division and the Planetary Geology Division.

This session deals with recent advances in understanding of the nature and stratigraphic distribution of impact-crater ejecta, both distal and proximal, of various ages and from various target materials. Papers will cover ejecta deposits in various environments of deposition, their peservation potential, correlation, and criteria for recognition. The number of new impact craters recognized on Earth has doubled in the past 20 years and it is clear that many cosmic impacts have had substantial collateral effects, which are also preserved in Earth’s stratigraphic record.

In April 2001, a GSA Field Forum titled ‘Bolide Impacts on Wet Targets’ addressed in part the matter of ejecta and collateral effects of impact in Nevada (Alamo Breccia), on the Colorado Plateau, and other areas (by speaker presentations). Impact stratigraphy is, in our view, a new and “hot topic” for the stratigraphic and planetary geology communities.

As this topical session is of timely interest, we hope that you will consider submitting a volunteered abstract for this session, or attending to hear what we think will be a most interesting set of papers.

Field Trip: Permian-Triassic Deposystems, Paleogeography, Paleoclimate, and Hydrocarbon Resources in Canyonlands and Monument Valley, Southeastern Utah.

The Sedimentary Geology Division will sponsor the field trip, "Permian-Triassic Deposystems, Paleogeography, Paleoclimate, and Hydrocarbon Resources in Canyonlands and Monument Valley, Southeastern Utah" that will be offered in association with the 2002 Annual GSA Meeting. This five day field trip will begin and end in Denver, Colorado. Estimated cost is $695 per person. This cost includes all lunches, transportation, lodging (double occupancy), a guidebook, and one group dinner on the third evening of the trip.

This trip will examine Permian to Triassic strata in the Paradox Basin on the Colorado Plateau in southeastern Utah. The trip will emphasize three major themes: 1) stratigraphy, depositional systems, and sand-body architecture; 2) paleogeography and paleoclimate; and 3) hydrocarbon migration pathways and trapping mechanisms. The trip will examine depositional facies in Permian and Triassic rocks ranging from proximal continental facies near the ancestral Rocky Mountains to distal marine settings within the Paradox Basin. The evolution of these depositional systems from the late Paleozoic to the early Mesozoic provides information necessary for paleogeographic and paleoclimatic reconstructions. The trip will be led by Jacqueline E. Huntoon (Michigan Technological University), Russell F. Dubiel (U.S. Geological Survey), John D. Stanesco (Red Rocks Community College), and Debra Mickelson (University of Colorado). For more information contact Jacqueline Huntoon at jeh@mtu.edu or (906) 487-2412.

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