

SAPROLITE

Winter 2009 - 2010

A LETTER FROM THE GSA SE SECTION CHAIR

6 January 2010

Greetings and Happy New Year from all the officers of the **Southeastern Section of GSA**. 2009 was an expansion year for us. With the addition of the Mexican states of Campeche, Quintana Roo and Yucatan, we have become an international section. We extend a warm welcome to our Mexican colleagues.

I can report that the Southeastern Section is in good shape. Our bank account is more than adequate to run our programs, with plenty in reserve. We had a fine program at the 2009 meeting in St. Petersburg, and we are looking forward to a big turnout at the combined Northeastern-Southeastern Section Meeting in March. So the section is doing well. But

There are a quite a few disturbing trends. Membership is declining, as is attendance at our annual meetings. Both these declines result in a decline in revenue for the section. More importantly, however, these trends reflect national trends in geology and the geosciences. Over the past 2 decades, many of us have observed the national trend to close some geology departments. According to the American Geological Institute, Status of the Geoscience Workforce 2009, <http://www.agiweb.org/workforce/reports.html>, the average number of faculty and the total number of students in geoscience departments has been declining for the past 10 years. This decline primarily reflects the undergraduate population. The level of female faculty in geoscience departments is low, less than 15% compared with 28% in other science and engineering fields, and hasn't changed significantly in recent years, despite the fact that the percentage of female students has been increasing at all degree levels over the past 2 decades. The percentage of the total amount of federal research funding for geoscience has declined from over 10% in 1996 to less than 7% in 2006. The total number of NSF graduate fellowships has declined from over \$1,400,000 in 2005 to under \$1,200,000 in 2007, before the economy dropped. This is all very disturbing. One trend I have noted, and which particularly bothers me is that some job opportunities that are traditionally filled by geologists are increasingly being filled by people with backgrounds in other related fields, environmental science in particular. This is fine if the jobs are not geology-related, but many of them are, or at least should be.

We need your help. Whether you are retired professional, a student, or anywhere in between, there is plenty you can do to help the SE Section, GSA, and the geology profession in general. Please start thinking of ways to help out. Here are some things we can do.

Get involved with GSA. Whether it's GSA or another society, be an involved member. The Southeast Section needs volunteers for many of its activities and programs. Some of

our officers and chairs have been doing their jobs for years. They can use some help if not a break. When we ask for nominations we usually have to twist someone's arm to accept. We very seldom get more than one nominee for a position. The section and the GSA would benefit significantly if more of you were involved. If you are interested, please contact me or one of the officers of the section. We are all listed below

Encourage colleagues and students to join GSA and the Southeast Section.

Membership has many perks, like discounts and member-only savings, but the main reason to join is to be part of an active geological community with access to all sorts of information. Members who are students or K-12 teachers receive free access to online journals. Student members are eligible for travel grants and research grants.

Support GSA programs. Especially in times like now, funds are hard to come by. I'm sure that many of you are having a hard time just keeping up your professional memberships. But if you do have a little extra cash, please consider donating to the SE Section, or to one of the many GSA funds. Funds exist to support education, research, student scholarships, meetings, awards, and many, many more. For more info, visit the GSA Foundation website <http://www.gsafweb.org/>

Help educate non-geologists about what we geologists do. In my opinion, there is no better service you can do for all of us geologists than to spread the word about the importance of geology in our society. We geologists have a unique set of skills, and a unique way of understanding our science. We are also obscure in the sense that non-geologists don't understand what we do. From my experience, most of my non-geologist science colleagues do not fully appreciate or understand geology. My neighbors don't understand what I do as a geologist. How many times have you told someone you were a geologist, and they said "oh, rocks"? And we tell someone about doing fieldwork, they ask if we were on a dig.

Every year when I teach Geology 101, I realize that the students in my class gain a unique and essential understanding of how the earth works, and how we can better live in harmony with earth, its resources and its processes. The other 90% of the students at my university will not take a geology class and will miss out on all this. What about everyone else in society?

So what can we do? Get involved with your community organizations like the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Indian Guides or other youth groups, or adult groups that offer educational programs. Work with your local school systems, give a lecture to a class, lead a field trip for a science class, or better yet for teachers. Volunteer for a local or national park and run a geology program. If you work for a small consulting firm that may not appreciate the usefulness of geology, sell yourself and your skills to your managers. In other words, take every opportunity to tell others about what we do and what we have to offer. Don't assume they know it. Thirty or forty years ago, we started certifying geologists because they had an essential expertise which engineers and others like them had not. Today, many geology-related environmental problems are still being addressed by engineers or environmental scientists who may not have geological skills. If we are to

keep moving ahead as a science, we must keep others informed of what we do, and how our skill set can be merged with theirs to solve real problems.

As we look ahead, we have to wonder what will happen. Is the geology profession shrinking, and how far will it go? Is it being replaced by other fields? Over the past 20 years we have seen a major shift in emphasis from theoretical to applied geology. We are certainly experiencing a transition to interdisciplinary approaches in all the sciences. We all know that there is a need for geologists in the resource, engineering, and environmental fields. Geology provides insight into climate change, evolution, sustainability, natural hazards, and so many other pertinent topics that face society. So our existence as a profession is essential, especially with so many global-scale problems. So why are we not viewed this way? What will the field of geology be like 20 years from now? You all can make a difference. Get involved. We need you.

A few words of thanks. Don Neal, our Secretary/Treasurer, keeps this section running. Roy Van Arsdale, Past Chair, and Chuck Trupe, Chair Elect, have been involved to insure a smooth transition with me. Jeff Ryan, Eric Oches, Peter Harries and Jeff Ryan organized the 2009 section meeting in St. Petersburg. Our Committee Chairs, Jon Mies, Eric Oches, Mark Groszos, Gail Russell, Robert Young, and Tracy Jones, have kept our programs running. And there are so many others who were involved in the section and especially the St. Petersburg meeting. These folks set examples of what all of us can do for the section. Thank you all for jobs well done.

Hey, we have a terrific meeting planned for you in Baltimore. Please join us at the **Sheraton Baltimore City Center on 14-16 March** for the joint meeting of the Northeastern and Southeastern Sections. Chuck Bailey and Noel Potter are Co-Chairs; Katie Farnsworth and Wright Horton are organizing the technical program; Gary Fleegeer and Steve Whitmeyer are coordinating field trips; and Rose-Anna Behr is in charge of exhibits. These folks are working their tails off to plan a meeting that has something for all of us. I want to thank each of them for taking this on. Running a meeting like this is no easy task. You should buy them a beer next you see them. Mark your calendars and join us in Baltimore. For more info visit <http://geosociety.org/sectdiv/northe/2010mtg/>

On behalf of the Officers of the SE Section, I wish you all a happy and productive 2010.

Sincerely,

Rick Diecchio
Chair, Southeastern Section

CURRENT OFFICERS OF THE SOUTHEASTERN SECTION 2009 – 2010
GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Chair - **Rick Diecchio**, George Mason University rdiecchi@gmu.edu

Vice Chair - **Chuck Bailey**, College of William & Mary cmbail@wm.edu

Secretary-Treasurer - **Don Neal**, East Carolina University neald@ecu.edu

Chair Elect - **Chuck Trupe**, Georgia Southern University chtrupe@georgiasouthern.edu

Past Chair - **Roy Van Arsdale**, University of Memphis rvanrsdl@memphis.edu

Past Vice Chair - **Eric Oches**, oches@cas.edu

GSA Councilor – **Dave Applegate**, US Geological Survey, Reston applegate@usgs.gov

Student Support Committee - **Jonathan Mies**, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga
Jonathan-Mies@utc.edu

Program Committee - **Eric Oches**, University of South Florida, Tampa
oches@cas.usf.edu

Nominating Committee - **Mark Groszos**, Valdosta State University
msgroszo@valdosta.edu

Education Committee - **Gail Russell**, University of Southern Mississippi
Gail.Russell@usm.edu

Geology and Public Policy Committee - **Robert Young**, Western Carolina University
ryoung@email.wcu.edu

Campus Liaison Committee - **Tracy Jones**, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga
Tracy-Jones@utc.edu

BALLOT
Election of Officers 2010 - 2011
GSA Southeastern Section

The slate of officers for the Southeastern Section election is presented below with biographical data on the reverse side. Please vote by checking the box before each candidate's name. To vote for a person not listed on the ballot, write his/her name on the blank write-in line for the appropriate office and check the corresponding write-in box. Your ballot must be returned to GSA no later than **March 11, 2010** – mail to:

Geological Society of America,
Attn: SE Section Ballot
P.O. Box 9140
Boulder, CO 80301-9140

If you prefer, you may fax your ballot by March 11, 2010, to FX: (303) 357-1074
Attn: SE Section ballot, or you may vote online by March 11, 2010, at:
<<https://rock.geosociety.org/ballot/vote.asp?Name=SE>>

GSA SE SECTION BALLOT

Chair – 1 year term

Charles Trupe Write-in: _____

Chair Elect – 1 year term

Christopher Bailey Write-in: _____

Vice Chair – 1 year term

Richard Laws Write-in: _____

Secretary-Treasurer – 1 year term

Donald W. Neal Write-in: _____

Please fill in the following required information below before returning your ballot. It is used only to confirm your voter eligibility.

Full Name (Print) _____

Signature _____

*GSA Member ID # _____

* Your GSA Member ID # is located on the upper right corner of the exterior mailing label; or please contact the **GSA Service Center** by e-mail at gsaservice@geosociety.org or by phone at (303) 357-1000 or toll-free in the U.S. at 1-888-443-4472.

(See Reverse Side for Candidate Bios)

Candidate Brief Bios:

Chair

CHARLES H. TRUPE, STRUCTURAL GEOLOGY. Educ: George Mason University, BS 1985; Univ of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, MS and Ph.D. 1989, 1997. Prof Exp: Asst to Assoc Prof, GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIV, 1998-present. Member: GSA. Research: Structural geology and tectonics.

Chair Elect

CHRISTOPHER M. BAILEY, STRUCTURAL GEOLOGY. Educ: College of William and Mary, BS 1989; Johns Hopkins Univ, MA and Ph.D. 1991, 1994. Prof Exp: Asst to Prof, College of William & Mary, 1996-present. Member: GSA. Research: Structural geology, tectonics, landscape history.

Vice Chair

RICHARD LAWS. PALEONTOLOGY. Educ: UNCW, B.S., 1975; Univ. of California Berkely, M.S. and Ph.D., 1978, 1983; Prof. Exp: Asst to Prof, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, WILMINGTON, 1982-present; Member: GSA; Research: Marine Micropaleontology.

Secretary-Treasurer

DONALD W. NEAL, STRATIGRAPHY. Educ: College of William and Mary, BS 1973; Eastern Kentucky Univ, MS 1975; West Virginia Univ, Ph.D. 1979. Prof Exp: Logging geologist, Exploration Logging of USA, Inc, 1975-76; Research Assoc, West Virginia Geol & Econ Survey, 1977-79; Asst to Assoc Prof, EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY, 1979-present. Member: GSA, SEPM, IAS, SGE, NAGT. Research: Appalachian Basin stratigraphy, petrology, petroleum geology.