

550.6
G.E.I. no. 31

GIS newsletter

Published bi-monthly by the Geoscience Information Society
Number 31 ISSN 0046-5801 August 1974

Committee on Geoscience Info' to be Discharged

[Editor's note: The following letter concerning the status of the Committee on Geoscience Information was forwarded by James Mello, the Committee's Chairman, to James Wilson, AGI President.]

Mr. James E. Wilson, President
American Geological Institute
1700 Broadway
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Jim:

At a meeting at AGI headquarters on May 17, the Committee on Geoscience Information discussed the work that it could profitably undertake in the coming months. The discussion was prompted by the fact that only a very small amount of financial support for this work is available from AGI and practically none elsewhere. It was our unanimous conclusion that the committee's function should be more than just a forum for the exchange of suggestions about new information systems or products and that the implementation of some of these suggestions requires funding that is not in sight at the present time. We therefore recommend to the AGI Executive Committee that the Committee on Geoscience Information be discharged, with the hope that it can be reconstituted at some future date when financial support for science information activities is more plentiful.

I want to assure you that the committee members realize the present financial situation of AGI and understand that the lack of support for our work is not the result of disinterest in science information. Nevertheless, without adequate staff assistance and other administrative support we are unable to perform a useful service to the geoscience community.

Even if such assistance were provided by AGI, the committee still would not have the funds necessary to implement some of our proposals. New projects such as a prepublication abstract journal or a survey of geoscientists to determine their need for various information services require substantial funding, which formerly came from the National Science Foundation. It appears unlikely that within the next year or so the Foundation will be making many grants to support new science information activities.

We regret the circumstances that lead to our recommendation for discharge, but this regret is tempered by the knowledge that in GEO•REF the Institute has the nucleus of an innovative science information program. Also, the GEO•REF Advisory Committee, on which three of us serve, can assume some of the responsibilities previously assigned to the Committee on Geoscience Information.

We hope that the Executive Committee will accept our recommendation for discharge and that AGI will establish a new Committee on Geoscience Information as soon as the present financial situation improves.

Sincerely,
James F. Mello, Chairman
Burton W. Adkinson
George E. Becraft
Roy C. Lindholm
John F. Price
A. F. Spilhaus, Jr.
Robert Van Nostrand

John S. Cook, Chief of Marine and Earth Sciences Library, Dies

John S. Cook, Chief of the Marine and Earth Sciences Library at Rockville, Md., died unexpectedly on July 14. Mr. Cook began government service in the Coast and Geodetic Survey Library in January 1941 and became Chief of the Library in 1947. He continued to serve in this capacity through subsequent reorganizations and name changes until his death. In 1953 he received the Department of Commerce Meritorious Service Award. He is survived by his wife, Edith Utz Cook of 8405 Victory Lane, Potomac, Md., and three daughters.

GIS Members Give Oral Testimony Before NCLIS

[Editor's note: The June 1974 issue of GIS Newsletter published the text of written documentation submitted on behalf of GIS to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science in San Antonio last April 23. GIS representatives Dr. Julie Bichteler [University of Texas at Austin], Aphrodite Mamoulides [Shell Development Company, Houston], Marjorie Wheeler [Lamar University] and Dr. Robert Wheeler [Lamar University] also participated orally in the public hearing. The transcript of the GIS testimony has been submitted to the Newsletter "lightly edited for fact and grammatical expression. The content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of NCLIS and no official endorsement of these materials should be inferred."]]

MR. BURKHARDT: Our next witness is Mrs. Julie Bichteler. Mrs. Bichteler, are you combining with Miss Mamoulides?

MRS. BICHTELER: Yes.

MR. BURKHARDT: Is that Miss Mamoulides there?

MRS. BICHTELER: Yes.

SEP 1 1974

MR. BURKHARDT: You have presented us with an excellent, very thorough report.

MRS. BICHTELER: Thank you.

MR. BURKHARDT: And I think it has got a very comprehensive collection of data and good generalization in it. And we find it extremely helpful, and I want to compliment you on that.

MRS. BICHTELER: Thank you. I would like to first introduce the people with me who are geologists and users of the geoscience information from our area. Dr. Robert Wheeler is associate professor of geology at Lamar University in Beaumont. He has been also for some 30-odd years in the oil industry here in Texas and can speak as a user.

Mrs. Marjorie Wheeler is also a geologist and she is now the science technology librarian at Lamar University. Amd Miss Aphrodite Mamoulides is head librarian of Shell Development in Houston.

We would like to begin by very briefly telling you what our priorities are and many points we discussed in our testimony and then answer questions and comments from you. I think if we summarized our testimony in a nutshell, it would be that our problems in the geoscience information area are mainly accessibility of material. We have some unique problems that the other sciences do not have, as you know from our testimony. And we feel that this accessibility has really two aspects. One is that of finding out whether something exists. We use much old material and foreign material and simply finding out about the existence of an item is a serious problem for us.

Our abstracting services are essentially defunct. We have no English-language U.S. comprehensive abstracting service as do the other sciences. *Petroleum abstracts* is the closest we can come to that, and that is privately funded for a specific area.

GEO•REF, our data base, is in dire financial straits. N.S.F. has funded GEO•REF since 1968 to the tune of about two million dollars, nearly two million dollars, and that funding ceases completely in 1975. When geologists and librarians get together, their first concern is what is going to happen to GEO•REF. Do we cut down on the coverage, cut down on the annotations, try to farm out the indexes and that sort of thing?

And the second aspect of this accessibility is finding out about it and actually getting the material to our libraries or to our users. Aphrodite Mamoulides was just saying recently that she found out that an information item was owned by the U.S. Geological Survey but they didn't have the time or the inclination to get it to her, hence she had to get it from French sources. These are typical problems for us. We somehow must convince major holders, major libraries with good holdings in geoscience, that they must lend to industry. She has said often that Shell cannot be considered a borrower for some libraries. So those are our concerns, and we would like to answer any questions or elaborate on our testimony.

MR. BURKHARDT: Thank you. Mr. Goland?

MR. GOLAND: I am curious, just this last remark incidentally, when you say that Shell would not be considered a legitimate borrower for some libraries. Would you expand on that?

MRS. BICHTELER: There are certain libraries within the United States, the Philadelphia Museum of Natural History Library is a good example, that have excellent paleontological collections. There are books dating back to the 1700's which sounds ridiculous, but paleontologists need these early references and they will not lend any of their collections to industrial concerns. They say it is there for research purposes only. That is not to say that our need is not for research purposes, but this is their policy and you can't borrow.

MR. BURKHARDT: Could you have access if you went there?

MRS. BICHTELER: Yes, sir.

MR. BURKHARDT: They simply won't let it out?

MRS. BICHTELER: They won't let it out of the building.

MR. BURKHARDT: It is like the New York Public Library.

MRS. BICHTELER: Running back and forth from Philadelphia to Houston is not the easiest thing in the world.

MR. GOLAND: And no copying service either?

MRS. BICHTELER: Normally they will not, and besides the plates in them, the pictures of the fossils, do not reproduce well. You really have to see the original, and if the maps are in color, if they Xerox them you couldn't have the advantage of the color codes on it.

MR. LERNER: I am confused by one thing you say about GEO•REF, for example, having a problem with funding. I am really asking that question because you serve a capital-intensive industry, and one of the things you say is that the petroleum industry, for example, is willing to pay for information and willing to pay for services. So in that case, why the fund crunch that you are having?

MRS. WHEELER: Geosciences does not only include the capital industry like the oil industry, which I am sure is what you have in mind.

MR. LERNER: I'm referring to the testimony.

MRS. WHEELER: The GEO•REF system which is operated out of the American Geological Institute for the, how many, 18 geological societies in this country, the American Geophysical Union, the American Association for Petroleum Geologists, the Geological Society of America, the Geoscience Information Society, all of these are members of the American Geological Institute. These various and sundry geological and geophysical societies represent urban geologists, water geologists, environmental geologists, petroleum geologists, mining geologists, people interested in where the next earthquake is going to happen so they can build in the proper places. So the GEO•REF system is not set up only for oil companies to use. If that were the case, oil companies probably wouldn't be concerned from the standpoint that they do have a good coverage, not complete, but good, through *Petroleum abstracts*, which they fund. We have all of the university geology/ earth science people who have obviously a different aspect of geology than the oil company.

This GEO•REF service is their only connection with the literature that exists now for documenting existing literature in the earth sciences. And just because I might have what I need, that doesn't mean I'm not ready to support what the rest of the earth science people need.

MR. BURKHARDT: Did another member of your group want to speak at this point?

MISS MAMOULIDES: When our questionnaire was sent out to different geoscience users, the typical reaction that we got back was "Why the emphasis on petroleum geology?" And why was there something special for them? Because they felt they were the best-equipped already. And I think most of us feel that way about it. That it is the non-petroleum geologist who has the problem as far as GEO•REF and indexes in literature. But the petroleum geologist does have the problem about accessibility.

MR. LORENZ: Do you happen to know why the U.S. Geological Survey discontinued the abstracting service?

MISS MAMOULIDES: I assume it was the lack of funds. It is not just one service. Since the 1800's, the *Bibliography of North American geology* and *Geophysical abstracts*, both of these have ceased. And I understand this year another one, on water research abstracts, will cease. And you see when the indexing of GEO•REF took these over, it didn't take them over completely. It should be more fully indexed, in-depth indexing, if it is going to take over abstracting services as well as complete coverage, which it doesn't do.

MR. LORENZ: Have efforts been made by your professional group through Administration and Congressional channels to try to get those services re-established?

MISS MAMOULIDES: Yes. More on an individual basis, I would say, and that may be the problem. Any time that people from Geoscience Information Society have shown great concern and have become more and more interested in establishing the U.S.G.S. as a national library, we're always told no, no, no, don't even mention that. We don't understand why, unless it is just a matter of funds and they feel they can't say anything.

MR. LORENZ: Was there an expectation that commercial services would pick up the services?

MISS MAMOULIDES: No. I believe GEO•REF was set up to step in.

MR. GOLAND: What is the approximate budget of GEO•REF, or how much do you think you should have in order to do the task properly?

MRS. BICHTLER: For the calendar year 1973 projected income was \$549,000, of which \$295,000 came from N.S.F., with other sources, Geological Society of America, U.S. Geological Survey and tape leasing and retrospective searches and that sort of thing. So I think that we feel that somehow we have to come up with another two to three hundred thousand dollars a year income to take the place of what N.S.F. had been providing.

MISS SCOTT: In the testimony submitted by Sara Aull, you spoke about geoscience networking and about establishing the Geological Survey as a prime source of information. Do you find slippage now in there? I think I heard you allude to this, that their servicing of history and —

MRS. WHEELER: I know they are short of personnel and right now actually they have curtailed all interlibrary loan while they move to their new building. However, prior to that, it was still very limited and, you know, don't ask for more than three items at a time and if we get more than that, we will send them back to you. Well, is that three a week? I have had them, it's not their fault, maybe it is the U.S. Postal Service's fault, send them back when, in fact, we have not mailed them more than three in a week. But they got them all on the same day, so they returned six or seven requests saying that that is too many to fill at one time. This is not because—this is because they don't have enough people working there.

MISS SCOTT: She mentions it would become the nucleus of all the network.

MRS. WHEELER: Because it has the biggest collection and the Survey's collection at Denver and Menlo Park would help supplement what the Washington collection has. Obviously the Washington collection is the largest in earth sciences. They just don't have enough space or staff to handle a lot of this, the requests of the borrowing public.

MISS SCOTT: But the Survey perhaps could become a —

MRS. WHEELER: It certainly could. It has handled them in the past except for the water abstracts. So it would seem to us as users and not knowing the intricacies of the budget and what not, there must be a way they could take it up again if they were funded properly.

DR. CUADRA: On page 25 of the testimony, there is an interesting comment and a sentence which I will read since the audience has not seen this. "The resources of the Survey library are as vital to the quality of life as the resources of the National Library of Medicine are to the health of its people." That is kind of a startling statement in view of the amount of money that the National Library of Medicine is getting from medical information services. I guess all of us are aware of the fact that there are more things to be done than there is money to pay for them. And one of our concerns is how to establish priorities. We will talk to many groups who represent individual disciplines and to each of the disciplines, there is a pressing concern. Could you say more about why you think geoscience-related information is that vital and makes you make the statement you did?

MR. WHEELER: I would like to try to answer, even though my background has been mainly tied up with the oil-mineral industry, still we all realize that the United States is steadily and rapidly depleting all of its mineral resources. We will eventually become a have-not nation at the rate we are going. The literature and other types of information gathered by exploration of every kind is an invaluable resource in finding the remaining mineral resources of our country. It is not just oil; it is iron ore, it is copper, it is chrome, magnesium, fertilizers, right?

We have a policy of mining as rapidly as possible the three major types of fertilizer and converting them into food and sending food abroad along with the fertilizer to help more backward countries. And yet it is an expendable resource. There is a limited amount, I don't know how much, that is very hard to say. It is a matter of price. But certainly it will be like the oil business which in its happier days thought it was inexhaustible, only to discover that we are running out. There is one other aspect, a new and growing field involved in geochemistry of soils and ground water in which it is discovered that a great many of the trace elements affect human health. Some very minor amount of, say, copper or zinc may be beneficial or very detrimental to health. A lot of research is going into it. All the information of that kind that can be gathered from old and new literature is a direct bearing on the welfare of our people.

MR. AINES: I should reveal from the outset that I am from the National Science Foundation and a member of the office where apparently some of your troubles are centered. I should also reveal to you that your problem has been a matter of great concern to us. When it was announced that we would have to reduce our funding it resulted in a barrage of letters and testimony from the field. The problem is largely the consequence of a very strong feeling in Washington that some programs we have been supporting were disguised subsidies and would have to be reduced. But on the other side, I should also point out that A.G.I. had agreed that the N.S.F. funding would be temporary and that A.G.I. would assume the necessary costs of keeping the system going.

The reason the Department of the Interior moved out of the area was an agreement that this kind of information service should be undertaken in the professional or private sector. It should be noted that the Geological Survey has been contributing considerably to GEO•REF by funding a large number of subscriptions as a method of sustaining the program. We thought we had a pretty clear agreement that GEO•REF could become self-sufficient this year. If this is not the case, I would suggest you make this clear to Joel Lloyd or your other representatives, but I am afraid that you will have to go to people other than those in our office to get additional support. You should be aware that funds are limited and that all professional societies are in the same boat. We are seeking to improve national scientific and technical information processes through our national information program, but there is little room for optimism. I would suggest you organize yourself in anticipation of a continuation of a poor climate for additional government funding.

I also want to commend you for this extraordinary report. I would like to get a couple of additional copies to bring back to my office. The document is well put together.

MRS. WHEELER: In effect, what you are saying is that after the government has spoiled us since the 1700's on documenting the geological literature for us, they are now trying to wean us and it is not going to work?

MR. AINES: I am saying there are two trends that have crossed each other. One trend is that science and technology in this country are so important that government funds should be expanded to adequately disseminate the information needed and generated by scientists. Opposing that trend is another that calls for users needing information to pay their own way. The latter is a well-defined trend evident both in Congress and the Office of Management and Budget. Between these two mills, we find ourselves being ground without any control over the process. Some of us believe that there has not been an adequate public discussion to rationalize the shift from broad to narrow support. The problem is also heightened as we move into more expensive mechanized information systems and as information volume increases. We would like to see more general discussion about this particular problem.

MR. WHEELER: Could I comment on that statement and to the idea that maybe the members of the Society should be picking up the cost of, say, GEO•REF? Did you know that the member societies, their dues go up periodically and forever and forever. And I am a member of the 16,000, or was a member of the 16,000, American Association of Petroleum Geologists, as well as Geological Society of America. Two years ago I flat gave up paying those dues. So it isn't going to get more money out of us, it is less.

MR. GOLAND: I think the point in regard to the financing of indexing, abstracting and special information centers is going to be a very important one as this Commission moves towards a national system. I would think it would be worthwhile therefore if it is possible for us to get a rather complete financial breakdown of GEO•REF so we can examine it, including its cost to the users and so forth. Now you mentioned that the various professional societies should perhaps pick up the funding and that that is impractical. Another approach, of course, is to have the users pick up the funding and to charge fees that are commensurate with the cost. I am sure that you folks are members of the National Federation of Indexing and Abstracting Services. Are your fees, have they increased to the user commensurate with the increase in other fields? For example, *Applied mechanics reviews* started with a subscription price of something like \$8, and it is now a hundred and fifty dollars, and it is going to go up again. Now have you indeed moved ahead with these sources of funding and comparable with other services?

MRS. WHEELER: I would say it is comparable. The *Abstracts of North American geology* monthly and cumulative index was \$5 a year through the U.S. Geological Survey. Then they ceased publication and put this on the tapes with GEO•REF at the A.G.I. and they in turn printed it through the Geological Society of America. The *Bibliography and index of geology*, which also comes out monthly, has no abstracts, only citations, a cumulated index at the end of the year, and it is \$250 a year as opposed to the \$5 a year. The coverage is not as complete and there are no abstracts, and it is a lot slower. It is costing more and it is giving us less, in effect, but it is the only printed version of any kind that we have to get into the geoscience literature.

It also does not include dissertations. It does very little along the line of *Geophysical abstracts*, which also went out of business, which also only cost \$5 a year, which now no longer exists, and is not in this \$250 a year thing, I don't think. I don't think there is three per cent of the citations listing geophysics anymore. So the prices have gone up, and we are getting less and we are paying for it, because there is nothing else on the market for us to use. We are not asking for something for nothing, but we would like to get our money's worth too at the same time.

MR. BURKHARDT: Thank you very much. If you can give us this information that Mr. Goland was talking about, we will find it extremely helpful. Thank you again.

MRS. BICHTLER: We will certainly do that.

Unipub Distributes U.N. Publications

Unipub, Inc. provides a convenient, comprehensive ordering and information service in the U.S. for publications of the United Nations system and other international organizations. Originally established as the U.S. distribution center for UNESCO publications, Unipub is today the exclusive U.S. representative for publications of various agencies such as FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), and WMO (World Meteorological Organization). To receive free catalogs and other literature, write Unipub, Box 433, Murray Hill Station, New York, New York 10016.

New Geoscience Publications

(GIS members are in caps)

BISHOP, OLGA. *The use of professional staff in libraries: a review 1923-1971*. 1973. Canadian Library Association, *Occasional paper no. 81*.

VINITI program: a monographic series of compendia on recent research and methodology in the earth sciences and biological sciences, translated from the Russian language material provided by VINITI, the All-Union Institute for Scientific and Technical Information, the world's largest information gathering organization. The volumes, numbered sequentially, will be published on a continuing and fully authorized basis by G.K. Hall. Their first volumes encompass, among other fields, meteorology and climatology, oceanology, physical and economic geography, fossil fuels, and oil and gas deposits. Further information may be obtained from G.K. Hall, 70 Lincoln Street, Boston, Mass. 02111.

MORRISON, J.L., and others. *Development of a prototype search and retrieval network for water resource information*. Final project report 1 February 1972-31 January 1973. Norman, Research Institute, University of Oklahoma. January 1973, 113 p. PB-226569/2GA. (PC \$4.25/MF \$1.45).

GIS Members in the News

EDWIN B. ECKEL has resigned his position as executive secretary of the Geological Society of America. His replacement is John C. Frye, Illinois State Geologist.

WILLIAM A. GARRABRANT has been named Science Librarian at Glassboro State College, New Jersey.

JOHN G. MULVIHILL is the new Director of Geoscience Information at the American Geological Institute. He replaces Joel J. Lloyd, who is now consultant in the office of the Foreign Secretary, National Academy of Sciences.

HARTLEY PHINNEY, 1973 GIS President, has been named Chief, Circulation and Reference, U.S. Geological Survey Library.

New Members

AKEHURST, M.
Geological Survey of Canada Library
100 West Pender Street
Vancouver 3, British Columbia, Canada

CÁNEPA, CÉSAR
Apartado 4332
Lima, Peru F0200

FOGWILL, W.D.
12 Johnson Cres
St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada A1B2J4

HAIGH, MARTIN J.
Department of Geography
University of Keele
Keele Staffs, United Kingdom ST5 5BG

HALL, EDWARD J.
734 Paulus Drive
Kent, Ohio 44240

JENSEN, RAYMOND A.
8703 Fox Hills Tr.
Potomac, Maryland 20854

MISSAN, HARJIT S.
127 Canada Drive
St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada

STAGER, DAVID C.
Geology Library
Guyot Hall
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

YUGO, SUSAN
Geology Library
University of Illinois
223 Natural History Building
Urbana, Illinois 61801

ZOCCOLA, DONNA M.
43 Pine Street
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

1974 GIS Officers

PRESIDENT: Dr. Evelyn Sinha, Principal Investigator,
Ocean Engineering Information Service, P.O. Box 989, La
Jolla, Calif. 92037 (714/454-1922)

VICE-PRESIDENT and PRESIDENT-ELECT: Jack L.
Morrison, Project Director, Oil Information Center, Univ.
of Oklahoma Research Institute, Norman, Okla. 73069
(405/321-6812)

SECRETARY: Ruth L. Keefer, Reference Librarian,
Technical Information Section, Field Research
Laboratory, Mobil Research and Development Corp.,
3600 Duncanville Road, Dallas, Tex. 75211
(214/331-6531, ext. 524)

TREASURER: Aphrodite Mamoulides, Head Librarian,
Shell Development Co., P.O. Box 481, Houston, Tex.
77001 (713/667-5661, ext. 633)

The *GIS newsletter* is published bi-monthly in February,
April, June, August, October and December by the
Geoscience Information Society. Subscription to the
Newsletter is \$10.00 per year and is included in the
Society's annual membership dues. All correspondence
relating to dues, membership status and address
changes should be directed to the GIS Secretary:

Ruth L. Keefer
Reference Librarian, Technical Information Section
Field Research Laboratory
Mobil Research and Development Corporation
3600 Duncanville Road
Dallas, Texas 75211

GIS members are invited to contribute articles or news of
general interest to the membership. Please submit all
material to the Editor.

Editor: Regina Brown
Librarian, Orton Memorial Library of Geology
The Ohio State University
155 South Oval Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43210
(614/422-2428)