

The Geochemical Society

Minutes of the 2000 Board of Directors Annual Meeting

The meeting was convened at Christ Church, Oxford, UK, on September 3, 2000 and came to order at 9:00 AM

Present: Mike Hochella (President), Judith McKenzie (Vice President), Mike Drake (Past President), Becky Lange (Treasurer), Dave Wesolowski (Secretary), Mike Engel (OGD Chair), Peggy Ostrom (OGD Secretary), Frank Podosek (GCA Editor), Al Hofmann (Director), Keith O’Nions (Director), Vala Ragnarsdottir (Director), Everett Shock (Director), Seth Davis (GS Business Manager), Linda Trower (GCA Manuscript Manager), Gunter Faure (representing IUGS) and Yukihiro Matsuhisa (President, Geochemical Society of Japan).

President’s Report: Mike Hochella stated that the mission of the Geochemical Society is to encourage and promote the application of chemistry to the solution of geological and cosmological problems. The Society executed that mission well in the last year, although the GS is always looking for ways to improve and several new initiatives are in the works. Highlights of the last year include:

- The production schedule for GCA has caught up with the calendar.
- The V.M. Goldschmidt Conferences continue to grow in attendance and scientific quality.
- The *Geochemical News* continues to improve in content and style.
- The new Business Office at Washington University is fully functional, and is in fact expanding its service base.
- A new investment strategy for the Society’s reserve fund has been successfully implemented.
- The first issue of the new Reviews in Mineralogy and Geochemistry Series (jointly published with the Mineralogical Society of America) is now available and entitled “Transformation Processes in Minerals”.
- The new electronic journal, *G³*, which the Society co-publishes with the American Geophysical Union, is off to an excellent start, and 85% of the current manuscripts and papers deal with geochemistry.
- Our Medals and honors are more prized than ever.
- Our new website is up and running (gs.wustl.edu).

Hochella also reported that membership in the Society has dropped from 1579 in 1998, to 1497 in 1999, to 1418 in 2000, or approximately 8% per year recently, and suggested strategies for reversing this trend. Although the pure numbers are obviously not pleasing, all other indicators are up, and “rebuilding” the membership is not only desirable, but in Hochella’s opinion, clearly doable.

International Secretary’s Report: Ross Taylor was unable to attend, but submitted a report indicating that his major

activity for the last year was the successful completion of extensive negotiations involving GS, the European Association for Geochemistry and the Geochemical Society of Japan, related to the site and timing of the 2003 Goldschmidt Conference (see below). Taylor wished to express his thanks to Dr. Yukihiro Matsuhisa and his colleagues in Japan for their patience and understanding during this process. Taylor was also heavily engaged in the organization of a number of GS-sponsored symposia at the 31st International Geological Congress (IGC) in Rio de Janeiro, August 6-17, 2000.

Gunter Faure volunteered to sit in for Taylor at the Executive Committee meeting of the International Union of Geological Sciences held on August 8 in conjunction with the IGC, as a representative of both GS and IAGS, two of the 36 affiliated member societies of IUGS. At this meeting, IUGS presented its new strategic plan, which is available on the web at (iugs.org/iugs/news/stratplan01). Faure reported that IUGS invites proposals from the Affiliated Societies for projects lasting two to three years that result in an identifiable product. The level of funding is expected to be about \$10,000, and proposals involving interdisciplinary science and which respond to the needs of developing countries are especially welcome. Faure also reported that Affiliated Societies that do not respond to requests for information from the IUGS Secretariat and do not benefit from affiliation with IUGS will be dropped. Finally, Faure reported that the next IGC will be in Florence, Italy in 2004, that the new president of IUGS will be Dr. Ed de Mulder of the Netherlands, who is advocating the organization of an “International Geological Year”, that IUGS would like to co-sponsor the scientific meetings of its affiliated societies and encourages the use by them of its logo, and that individual IUGS memberships are now possible with annual dues of \$50 US, which includes four issues of *EPISODES* per year.

Current and Future Goldschmidt Conferences: Keith O’Nions reported that over 800 abstracts had been received for the 2000 conference in Oxford, and that approximately 1000 registrants were expected. At this level of attendance, the conference budget was expected to achieve close balance between expenditures and registration fee receipts. Mike Hochella reported that planning was well underway for the 11th Goldschmidt Conference in Roanoke, Virginia, USA, May 20-24, 2001. They are planning for a maximum attendance of 1000, and have already obtained commitments from over 450 invited and keynote speakers for more than 40 individual symposia. Financial backing and logistic support for the conference, from co-sponsor MSA, Virginia Tech and the Lunar and Planetary Institute are strong, and the meeting and lodging facilities will be affordable and first rate. An extensive accompanying guest program is planned. Payment for registration and lodging

will be possible electronically by secure credit card transactions.

Judith McKenzie then presented a report by Alex Halliday, Jan Kramers and Rainer Weiler, organizers of the 12th Goldschmidt Conference in Davos, Switzerland, Aug. 17-23, 2002. The meeting site is the Davos Conference Center, in a ski resort area about 3 hours drive from Zürich. Up to 2000 participants can be accommodated and facilities are well equipped for technical sessions. The Lunar and Planetary Institute will provide logistic support for communications, abstract receipt and publication, etc. **The organizers requested that GS and EAG provide a letter indicating that they would assume financial responsibility for the necessary cancellation fee of \$20,000 US, and the Board agreed to share this responsibility equally with EAG.** Several field trips will be planned for the conference, and the technical program committee is now being organized.

Yukihiro Matsuhisa, President of the Geochemical Society of Japan, then submitted a formal proposal for the 13th Goldschmidt Conference to be held Sept. 7-12, 2003 at Kurashiki-Sakuyo University in Japan. Kurashiki is located about 200 km west of Osaka, and is served by the *Shinkansen* "bullet" train system. **After extensive discussion regarding the practicalities of hosting the meeting in Kurashiki, the Board unanimously approved a motion made by Mike Drake and seconded by Vala Ragnarsdottir to accept the proposal.**

Secretary's Report: Dave Wesolowski summarized a number of motions approved by the Board since the 1999 Board of Directors meeting in Boston, including:

- A shortcourse and RIM&G volume for the 2001 Goldschmidt Conference entitled "Molecular Modeling Theory and Application" by R.T. Cygan and J.D. Kubicki;
- Co-publication of G^3 jointly with AGU;
- The formation of an Executive Committee consisting of the President, Vice President, Past President, Treasurer and Secretary;
- Appointment of Susan Brantley to the Joint Publications Committee, which oversees GCA;
- Special Publication #8 in memory of Werner Giggenbach;
- The recommendations of the Treibs, Goldschmidt, Clarke and Patterson medal committees and the Fellows Selection committee;
- The nomination of Eiichi Takahashi as the next International Secretary, and Roberta Rudnick and Ed Sholkovitz as new Directors (these nominees have since been ratified by the membership and will take office Jan. 1, 2000);

- Appointment of new committee chairs and members, and David Lambert of NSF to serve as liaison with the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Treasurer's Report: Becky Lange reported that the liquid assets of the Society, as of 12/31/99 were \$486K, down slightly from the previous year. In addition to the traditional investment of reserves in certificates of deposit, an account was opened in 1998 with Solomon Smith Barney, with a balance of \$274K as of 12/31/99, invested in conservative stocks, bonds and money market vehicles. Lange reported that the projected expenses of the Society for 2000 are expected to total approximately \$121K, down from last year's projection of \$144K, due mainly to reduction in the cost of maintaining the GS website. Major expenses of the Society for 2000 include the GS Business office in St. Louis (\$53K), production of the newsletter (\$26K), support for student travel to the Goldschmidt Conference (\$10K), and a number of smaller expenses, including the purchase of new medals, insurance, support for meeting attendance, the GS/MSA reception at the GSA annual meeting, auditing fees, etc. Income from GCA royalties, dues, and interest has totaled \$187K through August of 2000. **Lange recommended that the society work with our financial advisors at Solomon Smith Barney to increase the level of risk (and potential reward) of our investment portfolio, which the Board unanimously endorsed.**

Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta Executive Editor's Report: Frank Podosek reported that the transition from Karl Turekian's Editorship is still going on, in the sense that many of the manuscripts currently appearing in the printed journal are still those originally processed at Yale. Podosek reported that the former system of Associate Editors has been re-established and is functioning extremely well, with 54 active AE's at present. The new editorial office website (gca.wustl.edu) provides ready access to information about the journal and the editorial office, and facilitates the electronic submission and transmission of manuscripts, reviews, AE recommendations, etc. Podosek has set a target of three months from manuscript submission to the AE recommendation, and this has been achieved in more than half the cases.

Podosek reported that Elsevier's decision to move production management to its own offices in New York and Stamford, Connecticut, coordinated by John Fotia, has worked out very well and the journal is now up to date and being delivered on time, with few complaints regarding delays, reprints, copyediting, etc. Podosek reported that his own editorial staff (Linda Trower, Manager; Karen Pollard, Assistant; and Robert H. Nichols, Jr., Webmaster) has done an outstanding job of receiving and posting manuscripts and tracking the enormous volume of communication among authors, editors and reviewers.

Finally, Podosek reported that the editorial office has made significant progress in the plan approved last year to offer GS and Meteoritical Society members who subscribe to the journal a free CD containing the entire contents of the 1998 volume of GCA. The cost of this activity is expected to be approximately \$10K per GCA volume (24 issues). The Board recommended that the Joint Publications Committee be charged with assessing the perceived benefit to member/subscribers, relative to its cost to the societies, before any additional volumes are prepared for CD distribution.

The Board voted unanimously to accept Podosek's proposal to include citation and acceptance speeches of the Goldschmidt, Clarke and Patterson medallists in GCA, as well as the newsletter. Immediately subsequent to the Board meeting, the Executive Committee approved extension of this motion to include the scientific lectures presented by the medallists in conjunction with their award, a practice newly introduced at the Oxford conference. Finally, the Board unanimously approved Podosek's recommendation to set the GCA subscription rate at \$122 for professional GS and Meteoritical Society members in 2001, and \$45 for student members, the same as the past two years, subject to approval by the MS Council. (Since the Board meeting, the MS Council has approved these rates.)

The Geochemical News: Newsletter editor Neil C. Sturchio was unable to attend the meeting, but submitted a report indicating that the quality of presentation and content of the newsletter continues to improve, and production costs have decreased significantly due to identification of a low-cost printer. The "prominent geochemist" interview series continued with interviews of Keith O'Nions and Harold Helgeson appearing in 1999 and 2000 issues, and more are on the way. The Board discussed the desirability of increasing the frequency of the newsletter to six or eight issues per year. EAG President Al Hofmann indicated that EAG may be interested in co-sponsoring the newsletter, and that this might help in providing material for an expanded publication schedule. OGD Chair Mike Engel and Secretary Peggy Ostrom also indicated an intention to utilize the newsletter more extensively in communicating to its members and the society at large.

Sturchio arrived at the conference later in the week and expressed interest in increasing the production rate of the newsletter, particularly if EAG and the OGD can provide more material, and if he could be assisted with printing and distribution. Transferring these activities to the GS Business Office, or to a third party vendor, were discussed, but no decisions were made.

Special Publications Editor's Report: Scott Wood was unable to attend, but submitted a report indicating that he

has taken a more aggressive marketing approach to sales of the six existing volumes in this series, including offering them as a set at a greatly reduced price and advertising the volumes on several electronic bulletin boards as well as the GS website, the newsletter, GCA and in a Royal Society of Chemistry publication, *The Analyst*. Wood reported that the majority of manuscripts have been reviewed for SP#7, in memory of David Crerar (S. Wood and R. Hellmann, eds.), with a projected publication date in early 2001. Wood also reported that negotiations are underway with the Society of Economic Geologists and the New Zealand Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences to finance the production of SP#8 in honor of Werner Giggenbach (Ian Graham, ed.). The projected publication date is 2002, pending successful completion of the negotiations.

Volumes in the new RIM&G series are handled by Series Editor Paul Ribbe if sponsored by MSA, and by Scott Wood if sponsored by GS. Wood reported that the first GS-sponsored volume, "Molecular Modeling Theory and Applications in the Geosciences" (R.T. Cygan and J.D. Kubicki, eds.) is on track for completion in May of 2001, and will be accompanied by a short course immediately prior to the Goldschmidt Conference in Roanoke. Wood then proposed the second GS volume in this series, "Noble Gases in Cosmochemistry and Geochemistry" (D. Porcelli, C. Ballentine and R. Weiler, eds.) to appear in 2002 without an associated short course. **The Board unanimously approved a motion made by Al Hofmann and seconded by Judith McKenzie to accept this proposal, but encouraged the authors to consider a special symposium on the same subject at the 2002 Goldschmidt Conference.** Finally, another RIM&G series volume, entitled "Applications of Synchrotron Radiation in Low-Temperature Geochemistry and Environmental Science" (P. Fenter, M. Rivers, N. Sturchio and S. Sutton, eds.), with an associated short course prior to the 2002 GSA annual meeting, was discussed by the Board, but no decision was made, due to lack of sufficient documentation and questions regarding the scope of the subject coverage.

Finally, Wood reported that *Geochemical Transactions*, sponsored by the Geochemistry Division of the American Chemical Society and published by the Royal Society of Chemistry, is off to a slow start, but that submissions are increasing. The Geochemical Society was asked to appoint a member to the editorial board of this journal, and Wood, who is now the Editor in Chief of the journal, was the Board's appointee.

GS Business Office: Frank Podosek, as GS Board member and GCA Editor, is also supervisor of the GS Business Office at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, which is staffed by Business Manager Seth Davis. Podosek and Davis reported that the main function of the office is to maintain the list of active members of the

Society and subscribers to GCA, including solicitation of new members, sending annual renewal notices to existing members, and collecting all dues and individual GCA subscription fees. The office also produces mailing labels for the newsletter and for individual subscriptions to GCA. The other major activities of this office are maintenance of the GS website and sales of volumes in the Special Publications Series. Podosek reported that transition from the former business office in Columbus, Ohio was somewhat difficult, but that the new office is now functioning smoothly and that Seth Davis is doing an outstanding job.

Podosek then reported that membership in the society currently totals 1418, including 177 students. More than half the members are from the USA, and Japan, with 84 members, is the next highest. Great Britain, France and Germany all have more than 50 members each, and the remainder are spread throughout the world. Podosek was surprised to note that nearly half of the GCA AE's are not members of the society, and that 19 of the 29 symposium organizers at the Oxford Goldschmidt Conference are not members. He suggested a word-of-mouth campaign to encourage prominent geochemists to join the society, and has taken the initiative of inviting authors who send manuscripts to GCA to consider joining the Society.

Podosek reported that sales of the Special Publications Series volumes has increased significantly, primarily due to the offering of all six volumes at a greatly reduced rate. However, he noted that shipping costs for the entire set are high, and suggested a \$15 shipping and handling fee, which the Board approved. Podosek also reported that, with the added responsibilities of Special Publication book sales, and updating of the Society's website, the Business Manager position is clearly a full time job, though the duties are not evenly spread over the year. Fortunately, juxtaposition of the Business Office and the GCA Editorial Office permits sharing of resources, such that the work load can be spread more evenly among the available staff. **Podosek noted, however, that GCA webmaster Robert Nichols, Jr., spent a considerable amount of time helping to construct the GS website, and requested an additional \$5K of budget authority to compensate Nichols as a consultant for his service to the society in 1999 and \$3K for 2000, which the Board approved unanimously. Podosek then requested a budget of \$54K for the Business Office for 2001, which the Board unanimously approved.**

Discussion then ensued on several issues related to the Business Office. Podosek and Davis were encouraged to contact Elsevier regarding preparation of the biennial hardcopy GS membership directory, which has traditionally been distributed along with subscription to GCA. The cost versus benefit of staffing a Geochemical Society Booth at

international meetings (travel and lodging being the major costs) was also discussed. It was decided that GS would no longer maintain a booth at the spring AGU and GSA annual meetings, but that the Society would maintain active participation in these meetings through symposia and theme sessions promoted by our Program Committee and the Organic Geochemistry Division. Finally, Podosek invited input into the content of the GS website, indicating that the Board had not provided an official statement of what it really wants for this site. The Board expressed overall satisfaction with the current style and content, offering minor suggestions, such as addition of a button specifically for Goldschmidt Conference information. Podosek indicated that he has been contacted about listing job offers on the web site, and after Board input, agreed to begin listing job postings for a period of one month from date of receipt, unless the initiator requests additional postings.

Immediately after the conference, GS and the Meteoritical Society agreed to keep their membership dues for 2001 at their current levels, \$25 for professionals, and \$5 for students.

Miscellaneous Items: The Board discussed a number of issues related to member services, including member discounts for registration at the Goldschmidt Conferences. This is complicated by the fact that EAG co-sponsors each meeting, and MSA will also co-sponsor the 2001 conference in Roanoke, USA. The Goldschmidt Forum (Presidents and Vice Presidents of GS and EAG) was encouraged to discuss this issue and formulate mutually acceptable recommendations.

Mike Hochella then lead a discussion of the desirability of introducing one or two new GS medals, indicating that the number of active scientists is growing rapidly, while the number of medals offered by all scientific societies within a given discipline is growing at a much slower rate. This discussion was sparked by earlier email communication from Francis Albarede, advocating a special medal to recognize technical advances that have revolutionized our ability to study geochemical processes using new instrumentation. Hochella pointed out that the Society currently awards the Goldschmidt and Clarke medals for lifetime and early career achievement in any (or more than one) subdiscipline of geochemistry, as well as the Treibs and Patterson medals for significant achievements in organic and environmental geochemistry, respectively. Dave Wesolowski then presented a proposal for a medal named for Robert M. Garrels, and intended for major achievements in aqueous geochemistry. Board members had mixed response, with Judith McKenzie pointing out that Garrels was equally well known for his contributions to global geochemical cycles, and others suggesting that aqueous geochemistry might be too narrow a subdiscipline.

Al Hofmann suggested that perhaps the Fellows title was sufficient for recognizing major achievements, and that additional medals would not benefit the society. Mike Hochella suggested two new medals, one related to the general theme of "water", perhaps named for Garrels, and another related more to "rocks" or the solid earth, perhaps named for A.E. Ringwood. A subcommittee composed of Wesolowski, McKenzie, Vala Ragnarsdottir and Peggy Ostrom was charged with formulating recommendations for the Board to consider. **During this discussion, Ostrom made a motion, seconded by Ragnarsdottir, to increase the frequency of the Treibs medal to an annual award, which was unanimously approved. Finally, the Board unanimously approved a motion by Mike Drake, seconded by Everett Shock, to provide honoraria for the Treibs, Clarke and Patterson medallists, as well as registration fee waiver for all of our medallists at the meeting at which they receive their award.**

A discussion was then lead by Mike Hochella and Peggy Ostrom concerning the GS support for symposia at scientific conferences and special GS-sponsored meetings. This lead to an inconclusive discussion regarding the balance between income and expenditures, which ended with Hochella suggesting that our goal should be to slowly grow our cash reserves, while providing as many member services, and funding as many efforts to strengthen our discipline internationally, as possible. **The Board then unanimously approved a motion made by Dave Wesolowski and seconded by Peggy Ostrom, to allocate \$10,000 annually for support of geochemistry sessions/symposia at any scientific conference of geochemical relevance. The Program Committee, which will receive and evaluate proposals, should keep in mind the discipline distribution of the GS membership in awarding these grants.** It is noted that the \$10,000 annual allocation of funds for support of student travel to the Goldschmidt Conferences will remain in place, and will be granted to each Goldschmidt organizing committee.

Ways to recognize long-time commitment to the society were also discussed, including lifetime memberships, service awards, and reduced rates for retirees. Suggestions included a 25 year service pin and reducing membership dues to \$10 or waiving dues for members over 65 who had maintained continuous membership for 20-30 years. The Business Office was asked to identify those individuals who have been members of the Society for 25 years or more, but no specific actions were approved by the Board.

The last item of business was introduced by Vala Ragnarsdottir, who indicated that the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG) was interested in having the Geochemical Society as one of their affiliates. One of their interests in approaching the GS is to facilitate a name change to the International Union of Geosciences (IUG).

This item was tabled, pending a more detailed report and recommendation.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 PM.

These minutes were prepared by David J. Wesolowski, Secretary, The Geochemical Society, and submitted September 30, 2000.