

# THE HISTORY OF GEOLOGY

DIVISION

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November 2008

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## Editor's Table

As I begin my tenure as the Secretary-Treasurer/Newsletter editor, may I again thank everyone, especially Bill Brice, who were so kind in helping me with the transition after the passing of our colleague, Christopher Schubert. We again send our thoughts and sympathies to his family. This is my maiden voyage on the History of Geology Division Newsletter. I welcome any suggestions and input anyone has to offer. In the spirit of our Division, History of Geology, I am going to try out an Editor's Table column. Herein I hope to make some cogent remarks about the history of geology. Again, I welcome your input. I have chosen that name because that is what Edward Drinker Cope used to call his editorial remarks when he edited the *American Naturalist*. I will be brief. A hundred years ago, the event at Tunguska took place. In this same year, the new Mackay School of Mines building and its geology museum opened at the University of Nevada, thanks to the donations of John Mackay's family. He was one of the original Comstock Lode silver barons. Barnum Brown found the first significant fossils of *Tyrannosaurus rex*. And this was the first "Editor's Table."

You can reach me at [jdhexen@unr.edu](mailto:jdhexen@unr.edu). Should you wish to call, 775-784-6561; fax 775-784-6655.  
Jane P. Davidson

## Houston GSA Debriefing from Outgoing Division Chair Steve Rowland

This past year was a somewhat tumultuous one for our division. Our long-time secretary-treasurer-newsletter editor (and keeper of division memory) Bill Brice completed his nth term of office last fall, and was replaced by Chris Schubert. Tragically, Chris died of a heart attack in the spring of this year. For some months, our division muddled along without a secretary-treasurer-newsletter editor. Bill Brice generously came out of retirement and put together the August newsletter. Adding to this problem was the unusually early deadline for abstracts for the Annual Meeting, which created problems for Julie Newell, our technical program chair. Responding to the announcement that we were in desperate need of a secretary-treasurer-editor, Jane Davidson volunteered for the job. Bill Brice helped bring Jane up to speed, and at the recent GSA meeting Jane was formally elected for a three-year term. Jane is an art historian at the University of Nevada, Reno. She came to our field via a very circuitous and improbable route. Her interest in the history of geology began with her study of Flemish paintings in which various species of iguanas were depicted. This led her to examine Edwin Drinker Cope's work on living species of iguanas, which in turn led her to write a biography of Cope. Her work on Cope led to a broader interest in the history of paleontology and geology. Our division may not be the biggest in GSA, but the diversity of our membership is wonderfully broad.

As the division's 2008 chair, I am very pleased to report that we survived this difficult year in good shape. We have an excellent team of leaders to guide our path over the next few years, we're in good financial shape, and our future is very bright. Below is a summary of our division's activities at this year's GSA Annual Meeting.

## **A. Technical Sessions**

Our division had a very successful annual meeting, including the following five technical sessions that our division sponsored or co-sponsored:

1. Breakthroughs in Paleontology during the past century
2. Alpine concepts in geology and the evolution of geologic thought
3. History of the influence of religion on geology and geology on religion
4. Historical links between soil science and geology
5. A general history of geology session

The sessions I was able to attend were very well attended. Session #3 on the list had a standing-room-only crowd all afternoon. Thanks to all of the division members who contributed papers and/or attended our sessions.

## **B. Reception for Students and Friends**

We continued our tradition of a Tuesday early evening “Reception for Students and Friends” with free beer and wine. We had a great turnout at this year’s reception, including many students who had a positive first interaction with our division. Several Division members donated books and other items for the door prizes at this event. Thanks to everyone who helped us out with this. Please remember to bring appropriate items to donate at next year’s reception.

## **C. Student Awards**

The Division was extremely pleased to give two \$500 student awards at this year’s meeting. Our award winners are Beth Johnson, a PhD student in geology at Northern Illinois University, and Jamie Stephenson, a PhD student in history at the University of Minnesota.

## **D. New Officers for 2009**

At our luncheon and business meeting the following people were elected to be your division officers for 2009:

Chair: Yildirim Dilek  
Miami University of Ohio  
[dileky@muohio.edu](mailto:dileky@muohio.edu)

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair: Vic Baker  
University of Arizona  
[baker@hwr.arizona.edu](mailto:baker@hwr.arizona.edu)

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair: John Diemer  
University of North Carolina, Charlotte  
[jadiemer@uncc.edu](mailto:jadiemer@uncc.edu)

Secretary/Treasurer/Newsletter Editor: Jane Davidson  
[jdhexen@unr.edu](mailto:jdhexen@unr.edu)

Past Chair: Steve Rowland  
[steve.rowland@unlv.edu](mailto:steve.rowland@unlv.edu)

Web Master: Hugh Rance  
[hughrance@rcn.com](mailto:hughrance@rcn.com)

## **E. Committee Members**

The following people have graciously agreed to serve on HoGD committees for 2009:

### Nominating Committee:

Rex Buchanan (Chair) (will rotate off in 2009)  
Renée Clary  
Marty Erwin

### Awards Committee:

Sandra Herbert (will rotate off in 2009)  
Ken Taylor  
Greg Good  
Steve Rowland (*ex officio*, Chair)

### Rabbitt Fund Oversight Committee:

Ken Bork (will rotate off in 2009)  
Bill Brice  
Gary Rosenberg

## **F. Necrology**

The following members of our division passed away in 2008. At our luncheon Michele Aldrich read their names, and we celebrated their lives and their contributions to the history of geology.

G. Christian Amstutz, Sigriswil, Switzerland, *notified* December 28, 2007  
Stanley N. Davis, Tucson, AZ, November 18, 2007  
John J. Dragonetti, Chesapeake, VA, December 24, 2007  
Ludwig J. Frank II, Auburn, WA, *notified* April 8, 2008  
Pembroke J. Hart, Washington, D.C., February 6, 2008  
Joseph H. Hartshorn, Sarasota, FL, May 5, 2008  
Richard L. Hay, Tucson, AZ, February 10, 2006  
J. Laurence Kulp, Puyallup, WA, June 29, 2006  
Donald H. MacDonald, Niagara on the Lake, Ontario, Canada, November 2, 2007  
Harold E. Malde, Boulder, CO, November 4, 2007  
Akiho Miyashiro, Albany, NY, July 22, 2008  
Alan E. M. Nairn, Columbia, SC, *notified* July 23, 2008  
Christopher J. Schuberth, Marlton, NJ, May 13, 2008  
John S. Shelton, La Jolla, CA, July 24, 2008

## **G. Gerald M. and Sue T. Friedman Distinguished Service Award**

This year's distinguished service award recipient is Bill Brice, who has served as the division's secretary/treasurer/newsletter editor for at least the past ten years. Unfortunately (for us) Bill was unable to attend the meeting due to his son's wedding reception. Bill's citationist was Gary Rosenberg. Sally Newcomb and Michele Aldrich read Bill's acceptance address, and they accepted the award in his place. See Gary's citation and Bill's acceptance address elsewhere in this newsletter.

## **H. Mary C. Rabbitt Award for Scholarship in the History of Geology**

This year's Mary C. Rabbitt Award recipient is Greg Good. Greg's citationist was Julie Newell. See Julie's citation and Greg's acceptance address elsewhere in this newsletter.

## **I. Acknowledgments**

I am pleased to thank Julie Newell (the 2007 chair of our division) and Gary Rosenberg (the 2006 chair) for their advice and assistance during my term as chair. I must also acknowledge Barb EchoHawk at GSA headquarters for her help and friendly reminders. I thank Jane Davidson, my University of Nevada-system colleague, for stepping up and taking over as secretary-treasurer-editor of our division. I thank John Diemer for agreeing to step onto the division officer rotation, and I thank new and continuing committee members for their service to our division.

## **J. Thinking about 2009 section meetings**

There is a push within GSA for divisions to have a higher profile at section meetings. Our division has been active at some section meetings in the past, and some plans are afoot for HoGD-sponsored technical sessions at future section meetings. As you plan meetings in your own sections, please consider organizing a HoGD-sponsored technical session.

## **K. Thinking about the 2009 Annual Meeting in Portland**

Plans are already underway for next year's annual meeting in Portland. Two ideas for possible topical sessions were discussed at our luncheon this year. One idea is to collaborate with the Paleontological Society on a session that celebrates the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth and also the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *The Origin of Species*. A second idea, proposed by our new division chair Yildirim Dilek, is the history of ideas in geology that have come from Asia. Because of its location on the Pacific Rim, Portland is a good location for us to attract historians of geology from Asia to join with us in the examination of this topic. If you have ideas about these or other topical sessions, please contact division chair Yildirim Dilek.

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## **CONGRATULATIONS TO BILL BRICE!!!!**



*Bill Brice (third from left) celebrating with his family at his son's wedding reception.*

## ***Citation in Honor of William R. Brice***

Gerald M. and Sue T. Friedman History of Geology Distinguished Service Award

By Gary D. Rosenberg

In bestowing this year's Gerald M. and Sue T. Friedman History of Geology Distinguished Service Award we honor a man who has a strong emotional attachment to the history of our science, who delights in sharing that pleasure with others, who is generous with his time and knowledge and consequently who has a gift for facilitating others' efforts in the history of geology. William R. Brice, our very deserving honoree, has a long history of bringing out the best in others in his service to the history of our science in our own Division and internationally as well.

Bill, now Emeritus Professor in Geology and Planetary Science at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, has been an active member of the History of Geology Division, Geological Society of America, for more than 20 years, and for many of those he was in fact its *primum mobile*. He was a member of the Division's nominating committee from 1985-1989, on the Chair's rotation from 1993-1996, and Secretary/Treasurer/Newsletter Editor from 1998 until 2007. Especially the last was a Herculean commitment: dealing with GSA about the Division's finances, communicating Division news and news of the field in a timely way to the members, and coordinating Division activities at GSA's national meeting.

During his tenure as Secretary/Treasurer, the Division went from publishing two or three newsletters a year to four, and changed from a print-only format to electronic and print publication. The program presence of the Division increased from one half-day session that was "guaranteed" to the Division to two or three sessions, including Pardees, topical sessions, and general sessions, sometimes all three in one year. These sessions are now competitive, not guaranteed, and the Division has an admirable track record in this free-for-all that establishes the GSA meeting each year. Furthermore, the Division has greatly increased its presence at regional meetings, commonly running sessions at one or more a year.

The Division has gone from making one award per year to three, including a student award designed to encourage the future generation of historians of geology. Bill made a special effort to attract students to the Division by assisting in the establishment of the annual reception and book raffle at the national GSA convention, which is always well attended.

The Division now co-sponsors a booth in the exhibit hall with the History of Earth Sciences Society. Initially, Bill and Sue Friedman ran it as part of the service to the Division, and gradually Bill gave it a stable place in the panoply of Division activities. It is a center for all sorts of informal meetings and coordination among historians attending the annual meeting.

Bill was a charter member in 1981 of the History of Earth Sciences Society (HESS). He was President-Elect 2001-2003 and President 2003-2005. He continues to actively engage colleagues around the world in Society activities and in publishing on topics of historical interest in the Society's journal, *Earth Sciences History (ESH)*, and he serves as an Associate Editor for the journal. For several years, Bill managed many of the administrative matters of that journal.

Bill was a member of the North American Section of the Hutton-Lyell Bicentenary Committee meetings in London, Edinburgh, and Toronto, 1997-1998. He was a member of the Board of Directors, Drake Well Foundation, Vice President 2001-2003, and President in 2003. He was a founding member and Inaugural President of the Petroleum History Institute and ultimately, as a result of his characteristic commitment, became Editor, Production Manager, Supervisor of Publishing, and Chief Contributor to *Oil Industry History*, the only peer-reviewed journal devoted to the history of the oil and gas industry. I remember a HOGD/GSA reception when a student who was a raffle winner made a bee-line for and grabbed the issues of *Oil Industry History* that Bill had donated, took them to a corner of

the room and intently studied them while the rest of the room continued socializing. That young man's response exemplifies how meaningful Bill's efforts are.

Bill has published numerous papers, not only on the contributions of some of our science's Brahmins, but also on many of the lesser known figures in the field whose lives he has thereby affirmed. Bill is continuing his scholarly work on a sustained level with the biography of Edwin Drake. Bill has also served as a HOGD award citationist for many deserving colleagues, so it is clear that in both research and service, Bill's mission is to recognize the best in others.

Bill has been an active member in the National Association of Geoscience Teachers (NAGT) since 1971 where he served as an Associate Editor, *Journal of Geoscience Education*, and he served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Eastern Section/NAGT from 1976-1992. He has also been a member of the Association for Women Geoscientists (AWG), where he served as a member of the Education Committee, 1993-1994.

Certainly, however, Bill's greatest accomplishments have grown from his collaboration with his wife, Heather, namely their daughter, Tania Brice Coffin, and son, Jack Armstrong Brice. When Tania was an undergraduate and Jack was in high school, Bill would joke that he had two children "into hard rock, a daughter in geology and a son in a rock and roll band." Jack shares a love of singing, music, auto racing, and much more with Bill, but not geology. Tania writes that, "It must be that all those years of posing as "scale" in photographs of outcrops warped both Jack and myself – I morphed into a geology teacher and professional geologist and Jack not." Jack pursued a career in business with an MBA and another master's degree in Public and International Affairs, both from Pitt. Jack and his wife, Kate Freed, reside in Pittsburgh, PA.

Tania, Bill, and Heather would periodically sit around the kitchen table stuffing mailings for NAGT while discussing geology. Tania became President of the AWG Foundation and Chair of the Chrysalis Scholarship Fund and, in 2005, was awarded AWG's Distinguished Service Award. Tania lives in Keene, New Hampshire with her husband, Reverend Peter Coffin, and she teaches part-time at Keene State University.

Others have recognized Bill's manifold accomplishments. In 2005, Bill received the Distinguished Service Award of the Petroleum History Institute. He received the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching, University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, in 2004, and the Dr. Edward A. Vizzini Teacher of the Year Award, University of Pittsburgh, in 2003. He was the first recipient of the Eastern Section, NAGT Distinguished Service Award in 1999. And, not least, Bill was named a Fellow of the Geological Society of America in 1993.

I submit to you that the History of Geology Division's recognition of Bill Brice's accomplishments in the service of the history of geology is long overdue and that he is a most deserving recipient of the Gerald M. and Sue T. Friedman History of Geology Distinguished Service Award.

Gary D. Rosenberg  
October 6, 2008

**Bill's acceptance remarks are below:**

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## ***Acceptance Remarks by Bill Brice –***

2008 Gerald M. and Sue T. Friedman History of Geology Distinguished Service Award

My dear friends, please accept my regrets at not being with you today when I am being honored with the Friedman Distinguished Service Award for 2008. But on Saturday evening, October 4<sup>th</sup>, our son and his new bride held their wedding reception, and we had many far-away friends and relatives come to Pittsburgh for the festivities and most stayed through the week-end. As a result, I felt my place was to be with our family and our son and our new daughter-in-law at this very special time. But please know that my absence, in no way, detracts from my deep appreciation of the honor you are bestowing on me today. My only regret is that I am unable to thank you in person.

I am deeply moved by this recognition from my friends and colleagues in the Division. It is an honor made even more meaningful to me as the award is named in recognition of the contributions of two of my dear and long-time friends, Gerry and Sue Friedman, and we all know of the work they have done on behalf of the history of geology. Also I have to acknowledge the contributions of the previous awardees, for they certainly set a high standard and I am proud to be counted among them. However, this award really belongs to all of you, for my accomplishments in the Division would not have been possible without the cooperation and support of the entire Division membership. Also I want to acknowledge the wonderful support I have had from Barb EchoHawk, who is our connection with GSA. Barb also should share this award in partnership with me in my recognition of all of her support and encouragement. A big part of the pleasure of my association with the Division has come because I have been fortunate over the years to work with some wonderful Division officers; in some cases more years than either of us want to count. Many may remember the "Hutton Buttons," and I still have mine. Seldom did any problem or task arise for which I was not able to find a volunteer to step forward. Once when a Division chair resigned in the middle of a term, the person next in line took over and ended up organizing two GSA annual meeting sessions for the Division; which, believe me, is really above-and-beyond the call of duty. Ask Gary Rosenberg about that sometime, but only when you both have a tall glass of wine in your hands, preferably red. When I was teaching on the round-the-world voyage with the Semester-at-Sea program during the fall of 2005, Michele Aldrich and Alan Leviton took over my Secretary-Treasurer-Editor duties for that semester. And those are only two instances in what has been the norm rather than the exception in our Division. So that is what I mean when I say that my accomplishments are really your accomplishments and I share this honor with all of you.

When I first joined the History of Geology Division about 30 or so years ago, it was because of an interest in the history of our subject that had been sparked by Professor John Wells of Cornell University and then brought back to life when I purchased a copy of Lyell's *Travels in North America* (the first trip) in 1977. As I started reading through it again, I started thinking about his descriptions of Pennsylvania and ended up writing a short paper about that. Then I was fortunate to be part of our symposium at the GSA meeting in Philadelphia in 1980 which led to the formation of HESS and *Earth Sciences History*. In fact the papers from that meeting were just re-printed in the latest issue of *Northeastern Geology* ... which arrived at my desk in late September. Little did I know then how much joy and fulfillment this association would bring me throughout my career, in fact it became the non-teaching side of my professional career, and still is. Some of my students would swear that it was a major part of my teaching as well, for I felt that if a student did not know from where our geological ideas had come and how they were developed, then he or she could never appreciate where we are today. So the history of my subjects was integrated right into the lessons, even though the students would happily point out - "that's not in the book!" To which I would reply, "How observant you are, but it **will** be on the exam!!" - and it was.

As I know you have many other items of business before you, I don't want to be too long winded - of course, you know, college teachers are programmed to talk in 50 minute segments, but I will restrain

myself today. However, I do want to publicly express my sympathy to the family of Chris Schubert. I only worked with Chris for a few months, but I know we all have suffered a great loss. Also I want to congratulate our new Secretary-Treasurer-Editor, Jane Davidson, and to say that there is no finer group with whom to work than the members of the History of Geology Division. I also want to thank my family for their support, my wife Heather, our children Tania and Jack (the one with the new bride). Many times they had to be so understanding and accepting of my absences from home as I stayed at work to complete a newsletter or perform other Division business. But before closing my remarks, I must thank Gary for his kind introduction and citation, and if even only part of what he told you is true, I am truly flattered. And I want to thank Michele and Sally for accepting the award in my absence, for they do me great honor by agreeing to stand in for me today. The four of us, Gary, Michele, Sally, and I, have shared so much over the years of our association and I greatly value their friendship. They are, as well as are all of you, fellow travelers in our effort to make the history of geology as meaningful for our students as it is for us.

Again, please accept my apologies for not being able to be with you today, but I am with you in spirit. And thank you, again, for the honor of receiving the Gerald M. and Sue T. Friedman History of Geology Distinguished Service Award for 2008. Please know that I have raised a glass of wine (red, of course) as a toast to the Division this past week-end, and I hope you will do the same for me at the meeting.

Cheers to all - Bill

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## CONGRATULATIONS TO GREG GOOD, 2008 RABBITT AWARD HONOREE!!!



*Greg Good accepts the Mary C. Rabbitt Award from 2008 HoG Division Past Chair Julie Newell.*

## *Citation in Honor of Greg Good*

Mary C. Rabbitt Award

By Julie Newell

“The Mary C. Rabbitt Award is presented annually by the Geological Society of America's History of Geology Division to an individual for exceptional scholarly contributions of fundamental importance to our understanding of the history of the geological sciences. Achievements deserving of the award include, but may not be limited to, publication of papers or books that contribute new and profound insights into the history of geology based on original research or a synthesis of existing knowledge.”

This year's recipient of the Mary Rabbitt award, Gregory Alan Good, exemplifies the principles spelled out in the official description of the award. Not only does his own scholarship provides us with rich insight and careful analysis, but he has made a tremendous contribution to the scholarship in our field by challenging—and helping—many of us to produce stronger work than we would otherwise have been able to do.

Greg received his B.S. (with highest honors—which will surprise no one who knows him) in Physics from St. Vincent College in Pennsylvania in 1974. From there, he moved on to graduate work in History & Philosophy of Science at the University of Toronto, earning an M.A. and a Ph.D. From the very beginning, Greg's scholarly activity has been characterized by the four C's: content, clarity, context, and connection.

The *content* of Greg's work is broad and yet concrete. From his dissertation on the methodology of John Herschel's optics, through articles and papers on geomagnetism, and on into work on geophysics and geosciences, Greg's work is always rooted in the concrete: the individuals, the institutions, the methodology, and the scientific work that produce our evolving understanding of the small planet on which we all live.

And the story Greg tells in his scholarly work is always one rich in *context*—how the pieces fit together, why time and place and human nature and culture matter in how the science gets done. By exploring a number of adjacent fields—and always insisting that the history of the earth sciences is *plural*—Greg constantly reminds those of us who work only in the history of geology that geology exists as part of a family of sciences.

He tells this story with great *clarity*—both in his mastery of the details and the clarity of his writing. One of his greatest gifts to the scholarly content of the history of the earth sciences is to improve the strength of argument and clarity of writing in the work of others. He has been phenomenally generous—and gentle—with his gifts.

But the “C” that best characterizes the whole of Greg's work is *connection*. His contributions to the scholarship of the history of the earth science are multiplied by the constant connections he creates.

For Greg, the earth sciences are always multidisciplinary. He creates essential connections within the subject matter by drawing together multiple threads of the earth sciences in his own scholarship and by his editorial work. This is evident in the breadth and quality of the work that appeared in *Earth Sciences History* under his editorship (1998-2004). And I can personally attest to the fact that most or all of those papers were better written and their arguments more sound because they were subjected to Greg's keen eye and always constructive feedback. But even more important, and reaching a wide audience, his 1998 two-volume Sciences of the Earth: An Encyclopedia of Events, People, and Phenomena is an invaluable resource. Greg's introductory essay, “Toward a History of the Sciences of the Earth,” gives the best introductory course in the history of the earth sciences that one could ask for—and in under ten pages. The final two sentences are not only a desideratum for the discipline, but

an excellent description to Greg's scholarly work: "Let history be a repository for our memories of what we have tried, of what has been good and what has not. And let this history be based on an honest, hard-nosed evaluation of what we have known about the Earth."

The degree to which Greg creates connections reaches far beyond the content of his scholarly work. His model of scholarship requires connection to his university community, the broader community in which he lives, and the members of the academic community worldwide. It is this sense of human connectedness that shapes not only his written work but the *way* he works. Scholarship is conference papers and articles and books—and Greg has given us all of those, but it is also being there, being connected in a community of discourse that creates and disseminates understanding. Greg has given us that, too. And he's given it to us in person in the United States, in Canada, in Germany, in England, in Brazil, in Ireland, in the Czech Republic, in Denmark, and in Italy. He has worked and shared as a Smithsonian Post-Doctoral Fellow, a Carnegie Institution Research Associate, and a visiting scholar at Cambridge University—a tradition he will surely continue when he becomes Director of the Center for History of Physics at the American Institute of Physics this coming January. And he has surely created a community of scholarly discourse among his colleagues and students at West Virginia University.

The 4-Cs may be content, clarity, context, and connection rather than cut, color, clarity, and carat-weight, but it very much was my intent to imply that Greg Good is a diamond in the discipline of the history of the earth sciences. And I've very carefully counted my words so I might conclude with some of Greg's. Greg dedicated Sciences of the Earth to a recently deceased friend and mentor, who, he wrote, "taught me that a passion for the world and the living augments scholarship." We have all been enriched because Greg has learned that lesson so well, and because he shares the results so freely—in print and in person.

**Greg's remarks appear below:**

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***Acceptance Remarks by Greg Good –***

2008 Mary C. Rabbitt History of Geology Award

I am extremely honored that the History of Geology Division of the Geological Society of America has conferred the Mary C. Rabbitt Award in honor of my efforts in history of the earth sciences. This award says volumes about the broadminded tolerance of historians of geology, since so much of my writing lies elsewhere: history of physical optics and scientific method, history of magnetospheric physics, of meteorology, and climatology. And I do invite all of you to read my articles, which must seem far beyond history of geology to some. Much that I have written, however, I base on ideas I encountered at meetings of the Geological Society of America. My ideas grew out of contrasting the different views of earth science and its history among geologists, geophysicists, and many others. I strive to integrate – and differentiate – tales from Earth's core to its cosmic connections.

Don't, however, look for me to write a version of Alexander von Humboldt's *Kosmos* for the 21<sup>st</sup> century! I intend to continue my historical writing on more restricted topics, such as "Magnetic Lives," currently underway. A large part of this book does concern investigators of rock magnetism and paleomagnetism, but in the context of a broad range of geomagnetic topics. I hope also to write a few scientific biographies, one of the natural philosopher John Herschel and one of Sydney Chapman, astronomer, theoretical physicist, and magnetician, to use his word. Both Herschel and Chapman contributed greatly to our understanding of Earth as a planet, although neither was a geologist. Maybe someday I will unite these interests into a history of knowledge of the Earth from a cosmic perspective, something like "Earth in the Heavens."

So you won't find much about paleontology or sedimentation in my writing. I approach the Earth from space, as a planet, at least back to Copernicus. Before that this approach is anachronistic. Earlier periods require the historian to approach the ideas of alien cultures, whose Earth was not whole, even when it was spherical. That is another story, another time, another historian.

My background differs from that of most historians of geology. As one might guess, I have come to this cosmic view of the history of the earth sciences from a different starting point. My first scientific love, astronomy, led me to major in physics. Astronomy, I thought, could wait until grad school. But I couldn't. I bought telescopes and built an observatory on a relative's farm. I lectured to school children in planetariums and assisted at observing sessions at my college. I eagerly read histories of astronomy. Undergraduate professors introduced me to Kuhn's revolutions and Polanyi's tacit knowledge. Then I stumbled on something new: history of science as a professional possibility. When I was filling out applications to grad schools for astronomy, I noticed that three had graduate programs in history of science. Two seconds with an eraser changed my future.

Given my different background, how did I end up spending so much time with geologists and historians of geology? Happy accident contributed somewhat, of course. My roommate in grad school, Tony Green, was a geologist who worked for awhile on a mapping project for Tuzo Wilson. Evening discussions with Tony introduced me to plate tectonics. Summers took me to the Canadian Rockies, Newfoundland's "fiord" country, and various mountain ranges for peak bagging and botanizing. Camp talk centered on glacial rebound, William Logan, and the Franklin search expeditions. My job was to teach my friends about the history of exploration of these places. We also collected rock samples in the Byam Martin Mountains on arctic Bylot Island for a geologist back home.

Geologists, I find, have one advantage over physicists when it comes to history. Geologists, naturally, think about time. They think about a succession of unique events, whereas physicists seek uniform laws. I find geologists quite able to "get" what a historian is trying to do. So many stories told by historians of geology revolve around characters with a wonderful spatial imagination and a substantial appreciation of processes over geological time. The stories also show individual scientists to have been real people, who worked both the field and the study. All of these attributes of history of geology make this community a natural fit for me, even if I mainly write about histories of geophysics, geomagnetism, and electrical currents throughout Earth and near space.

I have benefited immensely from a series of editorial experiences. When I decided in 1990 to edit the Garland encyclopedia on the history of the earth sciences, I thought of it as a "community-building" activity. I thought it would be done in a few years and I could get back on track, writing the book that would promote me to professor. Eight years later, *Sciences of the Earth* burst from the press, at a price beyond most scholars' budgets. A tribute to my determination – I'm like a Labrador retriever that will not let go of the duck. But more so, this first-ever comprehensive history of (almost) all the geosciences was a tribute to 140 authors, from dozens of countries. The field needed a "state of the art" book so that the next generation of historians might proceed further. I learned much from all of those authors.

My seven years as editor of *Earth Sciences History* from 1998 to 2004 and then as subject area editor for geology and solid-earth geophysics for the *New Dictionary of Scientific Biography* from 2005 to 2007 provided my crowning experiences working with more wonderful historians of geology. INHIGEO has also widened my experience by putting me in face-to-face contact with many I had previously known only as authors.

I certainly have been privileged to have met and worked with so many good people, inquisitive people. Thank you for these experiences, and for the greatest honor I can imagine for a historian of the earth sciences, the Mary C. Rabbitt Award.

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## **KUDOS ALSO TO:**

### **2009 HoG DIVISION CHAIR**

**Yildirim Dilek**, who received 2007's Distinguished Service Award, has received the **Benjamin Harrison Medallion** from the Miami University of Ohio for his outstanding contribution to education.

### **HoG DIVISION'S NEWLY ELECTED GSA FELLOWS**

**Rex C. Buchanan**, Kansas Geological Survey  
**Christopher L. Hill**, Boise State University  
**Stephen M. Rowland**, University of Nevada – Las Vegas

### **GSA STUDENT AWARD WINNERS!!!!**

#### **Student Award Citations by Ken Taylor**

This year, the GSA History of Geology Division presents the History of Geology Student Award to two graduate students, one in geology and the other in history.

**Beth A. Johnson** is a Ph.D. candidate in Geology at Northern Illinois University. The title of her paper is, "The Evolution of Glacial Lake Agassiz: Deciphering the Demise of the Laurentide Ice Sheet." She traces more than a century of investigations regarding proglacial lakes formed as the Laurentide Ice Sheet retreated following its maximum 18,000 years ago. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Newton Horace Winchell, among others, had reported evidence of the former existence of a large lake in the basin of the Red River of the North and modern Lake Winnipeg. The glacial character of the lake, named after Louis Agassiz, was recognized by Warren Upham in 1880, who interpreted the evidence in terms of a single retreating ice sheet. Subsequent research by Joseph Burr Tyrrell, William A. Johnston, and others, suggested a more complicated history involving multiple lakes and perhaps multiple ice sheets. Through 20<sup>th</sup>-century advances in techniques for determining topography, as well as expanded consideration of data regarding soils and groundwater, researchers developed an understanding of Lake Agassiz's extent, of the multiple phases of its history, and of the pathways and timing of its drainage. Beth Johnson's examination of the history of this geological research is related to her own research on the provenance of complex systems of glaciofluvial terraces along the Upper Mississippi River.

**Jamie L. Stephenson** is a Ph.D. candidate in History at the University of Minnesota. Her paper is entitled, "Religion and Geology: Explaining Earthquakes in the Early Modern Atlantic World." The paper is part of her doctoral project, "Before Lisbon: Earthquakes in the Early Modern Atlantic World," in which she examines published texts about earthquakes in Europe and America during the two centuries prior to the disastrous Lisbon earthquake of 1755. In this portion of that research, Stephenson studies writings about earthquakes by explicitly religious authors, both Catholic and Protestant. She emphasizes the seemingly comfortable coexistence of both biblical and philosophical or scientific elements in contemporary interpretations of earthquakes. The phenomena of earthquakes, with their distinctive imperviousness to prediction or control, lent themselves at once to both spiritual and scientific discussion. In noting the apparently common acceptance of compatibility between religious and philosophical understanding of earthquakes, Jamie Stephenson situates her research within a framework that departs from the 'warfare thesis' about the historical relations between science and religion.

## **History of Geology Division 2009 Awards Nominations Deadline**

All nominations and supporting materials for History of Geology Division awards must be submitted to Jane P. Davidson [jdhexen@unr.edu](mailto:jdhexen@unr.edu) by the following deadlines:

Mary C. Rabbitt History of Geology Award – *February 1, 2009*

Gerald M. and Sue T. Friedman Award for Distinguished Service – *February 1, 2009*

Student Awards – *May 1, 2009*

Address questions to Jane P. Davidson [jdhexen@unr.edu](mailto:jdhexen@unr.edu). Further detailed information can be found in the August 2008 Newsletter, or contact Jane Davidson. The August 2008 Newsletter is available online at [http://gsahist.org/v32n03/v32n03\\_aug08.pdf](http://gsahist.org/v32n03/v32n03_aug08.pdf).

### **Parting Thought**

The Lyme Regis Museum has mounted a financial appeal. If anyone is interested in further information concerning this appeal, please contact either Jane Davidson [jdhexen@unr.edu](mailto:jdhexen@unr.edu) or John Lello, The Financial Appeal, Lyme Regis Museum, Lyme Regis, Dorset DT73LB U.K. Thanks.