



SAPROLITE

Newsletter of the Southeastern Section
The Geological Society of America

Southeastern Section

No. 15, Fall 2003

SEGSA in 2003

What follows is probably an unusual SaproLite article from what you've seen in the past. I thought that it'd be interesting to walk you through my term as your section chair, to pass along my impressions and ideas from the outset and how they evolved over the past year. I hope it gives you an idea of how the chair operates within the constraints of the organization and charge of the management board; what powers I have, what's possible for me to accomplish, and what my vision is for the future of the section. Traditionally, statistics about the health of our section are presented in the annual SaproLite message, and I've attempted to summarize the important ones in a table at the end of the article. In a nutshell, the southeast section presently is healthy but we're facing some challenging times.

In the fall of 2002, the then chair of the nominating committee called me to ask if I would consider being nominated for the chair position. Like everyone else these days, I'm pretty busy as it is, and I felt a conflict between my obligations to work, home, and other service assignments; a hesitancy to add something else to my 'plate' and the indebtedness you feel toward GSA. My students and I are always grateful to receive letters informing us that our abstracts have been accepted, or even better, that student research or travel grants have been funded. GSA provides tremendous experiences for our young, motivated students! They learn how to write a proposal and, when it is funded, they realize that there are professional people who are interested in their research and are, in fact, willing to pay them to walk out that extra creek traverse or cut that one more chip for a potentially important thin section. I always enjoy watching my student's expressions as they walk into their first welcoming party ("exhibitors are giving away 'free stuff'") and their transfiguration as they present their first oral or poster presentation. I see them maturing and growing in confidence as they say to themselves – "Wow, I was able to answer those questions that so-and-so asked me!" I have benefited in countless other ways by the opportunities provided by GSA, and so I said "sure" I'd be happy to be nominated.

The first milestone came at the management board meeting for the 2003 SEGSA meeting in Memphis last spring. I remember being a bit anxious about being handed the chair of the section and taking over the reins from Allen Dennis, who would rotate off at the close of the meeting. The atmosphere was formal as Jack Hess, National GSA executive director, and one of my geology heroes Clark Burchfiel, president of GSA, opened with a few general statements from their "headquarters" perspectives. They talked about some new and exciting initiatives being discussed and/or launched, like "Specialties Meetings" for 200 to 300 attendees being developed for topical issues like "The Geological Impact of Water on Inland Fires," "Medical Geology," and "The Geology of the Russian Platform." The feasibility of a "Publication Aggregate" of intersociety serials was being investigated with the hope of providing a "seamless" venue in the future to electronically access your favorite geological journals. I was thinking this is all pretty neat stuff.

Clark caught my attention, however, when he stated – "We're also in a significant time of transition." The topic was broached with regard to the fact that we, like most all other similar types of societies, and America in general, were facing uncertain economic times. Many societies were in tough economic straits. Some were merging, and others were dissolving altogether. "In this light," Jack chimed in, "the sections are *very* important." GSA membership as a whole was below previous yearly averages, with only student membership being on the rise. Various ideas were forwarded about how to increase membership, or at least get back on par. For example, it was clear that we needed to make a stronger effort to connect with applied geologists. The "Specialties Meetings" were being designed partly with this in mind. My observation was that the common thread between each diverse idea wound down to the importance of the individual sections; those are, the Southeast, Northeast, South-Central, North-Central, Rocky Mountain, and Cordilleran sections. We really do make a difference, and we are each rapidly becoming all the more important.

From the outset, my aim as chair of the SE-section was to do what I could to help make our section stronger. From my perspective as a field geologist exploring the tectonic evolution of the southern Appalachians, I personally get so much more out of the Southeastern meetings than I do from the National meetings. Don't get me wrong – there are tremendous benefits to hearing talks from internationally acclaimed researchers who participate in the National meetings. I just don't expect to get detail-specific feedback when I give a talk at a National meeting because most in that audience have never set foot in the southern Appalachians. There's just no substitute to having local experts supplying one-on-one critiques of interpretations set forth at the Southeastern level.

The day after our board meeting, I grabbed Allen's ear during a session break and asked him two questions – "What do you see as our section's most important immediate needs?" and "What is your vision for the section?" Allen's response was typical of him – "We must continue to build on student travel and research support." Allen's basic "students first" philosophy is commendable and I'm sure partly correlates to our section's healthy student membership. Following on the second question, we mostly discussed in very general terms ways to make future SEGSA meetings more attractive and convenient.

A real eye-opening experience for me was attending the Section Summit and Council meetings at GSA Headquarters in Boulder last summer. The Section Summit is mainly for the six Section Secretaries, who traditionally manage the sections. The secretaries have multiple-year terms that provide 'corporate memory,' while we chairs rotate off on an annual basis. When I signed on as chair, I was aware that the secretaries did most of the work, and I also knew we had a dedicated and very capable one in Don Neal. Don encouraged me to attend the Summit meeting to glean what I could and to participate in discussions about various issues that soon will affect our Section. It was a great opportunity to discuss how each of the sections operates, to compare and anticipate issues looming on the horizon, and to simply get to know one another. This was an impressive and dedicated 'group of six.' GSA Council, on the other hand, is a group of 12 members who have been elected by the general membership and who, along with the GSA officers, run the affairs of the Society. They meet in person twice a year to vote on committee recommendations and so forth. The Secretaries and I sat in the background throughout the Council meeting to respond to questions and to provide input as needed.

After sifting through all the information thrown at me during those three days of intense meetings, I found three questions that need to be addressed to help make our section stronger. These are: (1) *how does our section fit in the overarching goals of Corporate GSA Headquarters?*; (2) *how do we improve section meetings?*, and (3) *what can we do to improve support to our student members?* As for question 1, my attendance at Summit/Council helped me understand just how we do fit in at the National level. I was very pleased to hear it reiterated from the secretaries, Council, and Corporate GSA that the genuine desire is to keep students as a focal point. I'm not much of a money manager and so it never really occurred to me that students also are our greatest expense, thanks to justifiable discounts on membership dues and meeting registration fees. It is encouraging to hear that each level is in "lock step" behind our students, who are, after all, the life blood for future GSA. As Section Management Boards struggle in difficult financial times, rest assured that there is unanimous agreement that the students have a unique position in GSA and that they will remain our priority.

All three questions above, are, of course, inexorably linked. My experience with the Auburn SEGSA meeting showed me how very important these annual section meetings are as revenue generators for our section. Last year, GSA Council proclaimed that Section meetings should be "revenue neutral with respect to Headquarters." The basic idea is that Headquarters wishes only to break even on Section meetings so that Sections can continue to produce revenue to support their various activities, which, primarily, is to support student research and student travel to meetings. It was interesting to hear the different

philosophies on how each Section chooses to spend its meeting revenues. I was pleased that our section is one of the more generous ones, supporting both graduate and undergraduate student research and travel.

One technological “bubble,” that is PowerPoint®, turns out to be a serious drain on revenues from Section meetings. Apparently, a \$600 rental charge for a single computer projector for a meeting is a *good* price! That’s difficult to absorb considering that host institutions in the past usually scrambled around campus digging up each and every gratis 35-mm slide projector and carousel for their meeting. Discussions of Sections purchasing their own projectors were quickly quashed due to their expense, problems of transportability, upkeep, and the very real possibility that this will be outdated technology within the next couple years. Some help may be provided by Headquarters developing management services that would allow meeting organizers to use their contract negotiating expertise and corporate purchasing power to minimize these and other types of expenses. It comes at a cost, of course, but the estimated savings are attractive and, at the same time, it would take a great burden off local meeting committees. Corporate GSA also now offers to handle guest accommodations and negotiated rates with hotels for section meetings, which would have helped us tremendously during the Auburn meeting. There’s no substitute for having GSA corporate experts handle such negotiations and I expect Sections will benefit greatly from this service.

How Sections tangibly fit into Corporate GSA generally boils down to money. Reiterating what I heard at the management board meeting in Memphis, money is a serious concern all the way up to headquarters. John Costa, GSA treasurer, gave a lucid accounting of our financial woes and how things might project into the murky near future, which is made even murkier by an uncertain national economy. Everyone’s concern is the necessity to draw from GSA’s restricted investment portfolio given a quirky stock market. Council asked the sections about relatively low meeting revenues for 2003, which we explained were probably due to a combination of financial hardships at the State and Federal levels, two section meetings were held outside of the U.S. (Cordilleran in Mexico, and Northeastern in Canada), two meetings were joint (Southeastern/South-Central and Northeastern/Atlantic Geoscience Society), and the fact that most of the meetings were on the geographic fringes of the sections. The sections appear better positioned for 2004 in most of these regards.

As my term now is rapidly winding down, I think it’s unfortunate that I’m just beginning to understand how GSA operates and how we can make our Section stronger. To the latter end, I have set in place a nominating committee to find enthusiastic folks to replace the present Management Board, folks who have the desire and drive to continue moving us forward. I’m also delegating select others to help me find attractive and convenient sites and institutions to host future meetings. In this regard I’m seeking several directions that I think have the potential to make some exciting things happen for our section. For example, I think that we may be missing a good opportunity by not setting a goal to include more of the magnificent geology of the Caribbean as a part of our section. I believe the 2009 meeting in Florida presents us with an excellent opportunity to move toward realizing this goal. Florida is one of our “fringe” states, but I think there’s potential for drawing nontraditional participants to that meeting by hosting it in a setting from which Caribbean field trips could be launched. We and our students don’t have to travel to Hawaii or to the west coast to see recent and active volcanoes. We have our own compact “Ring-of-Fire” lying just off the section’s east coast, with volcanoes and arcs that would make even the Cordilleran section, our largest one, envious. Blueschists and eclogites in Hispaniola and Cuba lie only 750 and 250 miles, respectively, from Miami, in contrast to 2,600 miles to the Franciscan. I have the idea that herein lies a whole gamut of possibilities ranging from some technical sessions/symposia and/or field trips involving Caribbean geology/geologists to the incorporation of Puerto Rico as a full-blown member, the 12th one, of our section. The latter suggestion would involve a host institution in Puerto Rico, usually a university geology department, being host to an annual meeting at least once every 12 years, and I’m in contact with some folks there about the feasibility. I envision Puerto Rico being the perfect launching point for many interesting excursions on youthful features that we simply don’t have in the southeastern U.S. (e.g., modern and recent arcs, volcanoes, and ultra-high-pressure metamorphic rocks). These serve as modern analogues for features we know are complexly caught up in the folded, metamorphosed, and thrust Appalachian terrains. Why, I imagine there might even be some soft rocks for those of you who prefer those types of things. When I chaired the Auburn SEGSA meeting in 1997, I remember the parting shot of then chair Geoff Feiss was the idea of renting a Caribbean cruise ship for a future meeting, since some good deals can be found in this relative “off” part of the season.

In the mean time, we also are blessed in the southeastern U.S. with a variety of rocks and tremendous opportunities to investigate our part of Earth and its history. Hope to see you in Washington, D.C., next month. I’d be curious to hear your thoughts on all or any of this.

Type	Category	# awards	\$ per award
Student travel grants	Denver	42	\$107
	Memphis	29	\$155
	Seattle	50	\$90
Student research grants	graduate, Spring 2003	10	\$370-\$1,100
	undergraduate, Spring 2003	5	\$100-\$200
	undergraduate, Fall 2003	4	\$250

Mark Steltenpohl
Chair, Southeastern Section

Southeastern Section Officers: 2002-2003

Chair: Mark Steltenpohl
Past Chair: Allen Dennis
Vice Chair: Richard Diecchio
Past Vice-Chair: Daniel Larsen
Chair-Elect: John Kiefer
Secretary-Treasurer: Donald Neal

Nominations for Section Officers: 2003-2004

The Nominating Committee submitted the following nominees:

Chair: John Kiefer
Chair-elect: Michael Katuna
Vice-Chair: Gail Russell
Secretary-Treasurer: Donald Neal

Financial Status of the Section

At the end of FY 2002-2003 (June 30, 2003), the Section had \$60,670.61 in its accounts. Interest on our accounts, together with whatever surplus is derived from the Southeastern Section meetings, and Section members’ dues, is used to fund the Section’s Student Grant Program, Student Travel Program and the general operations of the section.

52nd Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Section

The Department of Earth Sciences of the University of Memphis hosted a joint meeting of the South-Central (37th) and Southeastern (52nd) Sections of the Geological Society of America from March 12 through 14, 2003, in Memphis, Tennessee. Daniel Larsen was the General Chair of the meeting. A total of 306 papers were presented in symposia (4), theme sessions (21), and topical sessions (10). Ten field trips were run. The meeting sponsored 3 workshops and the Roy Shlemon Mentoring Program in Applied Geology.

53rd Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Section

The 39th annual meeting of the Northeastern Section and the 53rd annual meeting of the Southeastern Section of the Geological Society of America will be held March 25-27 at the Hilton McLean Tysons Corner in Tysons Corner, Virginia. The hosts for the 2004 meeting of the Geological Society of America Northeastern and Southeastern Sections are the American Geological Institute, Frederick Community College, George Mason University, George Washington University, Nomad Geosciences, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the University of Maryland. George Stephens and Rick Diecchio will be the meeting co-chairs.

The **opening reception** will be held on Wednesday evening from 6 to 9 p.m. in the Hilton.

Be sure to check the meeting web page for details.
<<http://www.geosociety.org/sectdiv/northe/04nesemtg.htm>>

FOR STUDENTS

Roy J. Shlemon Mentor Program in Applied Geoscience

Sponsored by GSA Foundation. Thurs., March 25, and Fri., March 26, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. [Karlon Blythe](#). This interactive and informative program

for undergraduate and graduate students, led by professional geoscientists, will cover real-life issues including professional opportunities and challenges that await students after graduation. Plan to attend both free luncheons to hear different presenters each day. Students will receive **FREE LUNCH** tickets to attend both Shlemon Programs in their registration packets. However, space is limited. First come, first served.

John Mann Mentors in Applied Hydrogeology Program

Sponsored by GSA Foundation. Friday, March 26, 6:30 - 8:00 a.m. [Karlton Blythe](#). This **FREE BREAKFAST for students is an invitation-only event** that provides a platform for students interested in hydrogeology as a career to interact one-on-one with practicing hydrogeologists. Eligibility is limited to students who have previously declared their career interest to be hydrology or hydrogeology on their GSA membership applications and who meet preregistration deadlines for the Section's meeting. Attendance is limited.

Future Section Meetings

2005 – Biloxi, MS, Gail Russell will be the Local Chair.
2006 -- Knoxville, TN, Claudia Mora will be the Local Chair.
2007 -- Savannah, GA, Dallas Rhodes will be the Local Chair.
2008 -- Suggestions and volunteers are needed.

Student Travel Grants

The Student Travel Grant program continues to be very popular. In the spring of 2003, the Section spent a total of \$4495 (\$2250 from the GSA Foundation) to help cover the travel costs of 29 students who gave papers at the meeting Memphis, TN. The Section appreciates the matching funds provided by the GSA Foundation and spent \$4500 (including \$2250 from the GSA Foundation) for travel to the Seattle meeting. Total student travel expenditures for 2002-2003 fiscal year was \$8,989.

Student Research Grants

The Section received twenty-eight applications for 2003 (7 Ph.D., 16 M.S., and 5 B.S.). The Student Support Committee met and made funding recommendations. Fifteen student research proposals (3 Ph.D., 7 M.S., and 5 B.S.) were funded for a total amount of \$ 7000.

Camann ,Eleanor J.	University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Schuneman, Patrick	University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Slater, Valerie	University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Allen, John A.	University of Georgia
Cook, Jenny	University of Tennessee, Knoxville
DeAngelis, Michael T.	University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Kenst, Andrew B.	University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Schein, Jason P.	Auburn University
Whitfield, Clifton W.	East Carolina University
Zahid, Khandakar M.	Auburn University
Craddock, William H.	College of William and Mary
Laird, Mollie	Western Kentucky University
Meyer, Christine	James Madison University
Shirvell, Catherine	College of William and Mary
Smith, Isiah Carl	James Madison University

Deadlines for Student Support Applications

The Section provides research and travel grants to deserving students. Research awards are available to support undergraduate, M.S., and Ph.D. research for GSA members enrolled in universities in the Section. Research grant applications must be on current GSA forms and comply with all GSA rules. Travel assistance is available for GSA members presenting papers or posters at GSA meetings. Applications for travel grants must include an official form, certification of GSA membership (e.g., copy of membership card), documentation of student enrollment, and documentation that the student is presenting a paper (e.g., abstract

acceptance). The Section Web Page (<http://www.geology.ecu.edu/geology/seggsa/seggsa.html>) provides travel grant application forms and information.

Dr. Donald W. Neal
Secretary, SEGSA
Department of Geology
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC 27858-4353
neald@mail.ecu.edu or (252) 328 4392

The application deadlines are:

Graduate Student Research Grants: February 1, 2004
Undergraduate Student Research Grants: October 1, 2004
Travel Grants to Tysons Corner, VA: February 28, 2004
Travel Grants to Denver: October 1, 2004

Election of Officers, 2004-2005

Southeastern Section, GSA

The slate of officers for the Southeastern Section election is presented below with biographic data. Please vote by checking the appropriate box or by writing in the name of a nominee.

Your ballot must be returned to GSA in Boulder no later than February 28, 2004. Please fold your ballot on the line and **tape** (do not staple) it, making certain the address is showing, and affix a first class postage stamp.

BALLOT

Chair	Chair-elect	Vice-Chair	Secretary-Treasurer
John Kiefer ()	Michael Katuna ()	Gail Russell ()	Donald Neal ()
_____ ()	_____ ()	_____ ()	_____ ()
(write-in)	(write-in)	(write-in)	(write-in)

JOHN D. KIEFER, ENGINEERING GEOLOGY. *Educ:* St. Joseph's College (Ind.), B.S. 61; Univ of Illinois, Champaign, M.S. 65; Ph.D. 70; *Prof Exp:* Instructor, University of Illinois, 65-67; Assistant Professor, Department of Geology, Eastern Kentucky University, 1967-71; Chief Engineering Geologist, Geotechnical Engineering Associates, 1971-78; Head of Water Resources, Alabama Geological Survey, 1978-79; Head of Water Resources, Kentucky Geological Survey 1979-81, Assistant State Geologist, Kentucky Geological Survey, 1981-present; Adjunct Professor, University of Kentucky, Department of Geological Sciences, 1997-present; *Mem:* GSA, AAPG, AEG, SEPM, AAAS, NSPE, Registered Professional Geologist: Kentucky # 1283, Indiana # 1968; *Mailing Add:* Kentucky Geological Survey, 228 Mining and Mineral Resources Bldg., Univ. of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0107; e-mail: kiefer@kgs.mm.uky.edu

MICHAEL KATUNA, SEDIMENTOLOGY. *Educ:* Queens College C.U.N.Y., BA 69; Queens College C.U.N.Y., MA 71; Univ. of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Ph.D. 74. *Prof Exp:* Assist to Prof College of Charleston 74-present. *Mem:* GSA. *Res:* Marine geology; sedimentology; coastal geology; and coastal-plain stratigraphy. *Mailing Add:* Dept of Geology & Environmental Geosciences, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 29424; email: katunam@cofc.edu

GAIL RUSSELL, GEOCHRONOLOGY. *Educ:* Florida State University, B.S. 1968; Florida State University, M.S. 1970; Florida State University, Ph.D. 1978. *Prof Exp:* Research associate, Virginia Tech, 1978-1981; Assist to Prof Univ of Southern Mississippi xx-present. *Mem:* GSA, MSA, AGU. *Res:* Geochronology and radioisotopes; earth-science education; environmental geochemistry. *Mailing Add:* Department of Geology, Box 5044, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS 39406; email: Gail.Russell@usm.edu

DONALD W. NEAL, STRATIGRAPHY. *Educ:* College of William and Mary BS 73; Eastern Kentucky Univ, MS 75; West Virginia Univ, Ph.D. 79. *Prof Exp:* Logging Geol, Exploration Logging of USA, Inc, 75-76, Research Assoc West Virginia Geol and Econ Survey, 77-79, Asst to Assoc Prof EAST CAROLINA UNIV, 79-present. *Mem:* GSA, SEPM, IAS, SGE, NAGT. *Res:* Appalachian Basin stratigraphy, petrology, petroleum geology. *Mailing Add:* Dept of Geology, East Carolina Univ, Greenville, NC 27858-4353; email: neald@mail.ecu.edu

(fold here)

place
stamp
here

**Southeastern Section Ballot
Geological Society of America
P.O. Box 9140
Boulder, CO 80301-9140**