

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE PROPOSED
INTERNATIONAL GEOSCIENCE EDUCATION ORGANIZATION Newsletter
98-1 3/1/98

This is the first of what we hope will be, at a minimum, quarterly newsletters for the newly emerging International Geoscience Education Organization. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide a mechanism for distributing information about the plans for this proposed organization, to forward information on upcoming international and national geoscience education meetings and conferences. We also want to provide an informal atmosphere to discuss the issues, the barriers, the breakthroughs, the opportunities and the successes as we work toward a global awareness of the geosciences and their critical role in the 21st century.

Before we get started, we need to talk about how this process of communication can be successful. We have started with a list of interested people from around the globe who have a vital interest in how we educate our children and the society at large about the importance of understanding the Earth systems. However, we cannot begin to reach everyone for whom this issue is important. Limitations on our systems mean that we simply cannot serve everyone in every country. We are looking for people willing to be contact points or nodes for further distribution of information. Please develop all the opportunities that you have to further disseminate information. If you can develop an email list, please forward these messages, and encourage your contacts to do likewise. In this way, we will be able to reach far more people. Feel free to reproduce and disseminate this information in any other format if email is not available.

For our efforts to thrive and for the message to truly unite us around the globe, everyone must assume the challenge of communication. As these nodes of dissemination are developed, they can be the consolidation points for forwarding information from each respective country back to the editors for consideration for the newsletter. Although this may seem cumbersome at the moment and fraught with loopholes, it has been through the sheer determination and will of like-minded individuals like you that we have come this far. Please email us and provide us with your thoughts. If you can serve as a country contact, let us know. If you are willing to serve as a contact responsible for delivering to your country but do not want to tackle gathering information for the newsletter that is fine. If you can recommend someone who might begin serving either role, please let us know. In the meantime, if you have articles or other information that you would like submitted to the newsletter, please forward them to us at one of the attached email addresses. We will forward your request to the entire steering committee for review and adoption.

Laure G. Wallace
U.S. Geological Survey
914 National Center Reston,
VA 20192,
USA
(Lwallace@usgs.gov).

Mary E. Dowse
Department of Natural Sciences

Western New Mexico
University Silver City,
NM 88062
USA
(dowsem@silver.wnmu.edu)

In the sections below we will give you a history of how this proposed Association came into being, provide you with a draft copy of a constitution that will be considered at the next international meeting, give you a brief synopsis of the proposals to host GeoSciEd III and present the decisions of the steering committee to select Australia as the site of the meeting in 2000 and the request to Canada to consider hosting GeoSciEd IV. In addition, the full text of this email is in an attached wordperfect file.

THE HISTORY SO FAR - Excerpts from: An International Association for
Geoscience Education - The Story So Far By Chris King (UK)

At GeoSciEd I in Southampton, England, April 1993: During the plenary session of the Southampton Conference, the possibility of a future conference was discussed and the United States was considered the most suitable place.

Following the conference, a committee meeting of the Commission on Geoscience Education and Training of the International Union of Geological Sciences (COGEOED) took place. During the meeting the idea of a newsletter that could keep all conference participants in touch with international developments in geoscience education was discussed and thought to be important for the future.

After GeoSciEd I: After a long time gap, R. Shankar of Mangalore University was asked to be editor of a newsletter. Over time he was able to produce three issues. These were circulated to all the participants of the GeoSciEd I Conference and as widely as possible beyond that group. The newsletter, about 12 pages in length, covered a range of issues relating to geoscience education. It suffered from not having a wide ranging group of contributors and tended to have a south east Asian focus. Funding through COGEOED was never guaranteed and was often a problem, resulting in delays.

Following the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) Conference in Beijing in 1996, COGEOED was disbanded so that no further newsletters were produced.

In retrospect, although the GeoSciEd I Conference in Southampton was a great success - a wide range of topics were covered by a range of excellent presentations and the full proceedings of the conference was eventually published - one of the failings was that no mechanism was developed to ensure that future conferences would take place and no method was adopted to ensure that communication continued between conferences through a comprehensive, widely distributed newsletter.

Before GeoSciEd II: Our American colleagues, John Carpenter, Frank Ireton, Vic Mayer and Laure Wallace, spurred on by Nir Orion from Israel and supported by a host of people in the USA, instigated GeoSciEd II in Hawai'i to take place in July 1997. We were very keen that GeoSciEd II should be used as a platform to develop some mechanism to develop future conferences and a newsletter. The first push for this came from Nir Orion and email circulated between Nir, John Carpenter and Chris King before the conference, to determine the best way to move forward. We decided to hold a pre-conference meeting of people that were likely to be enthusiastic for such an endeavor. This was planned for the first evening of the GeoSciEd II conference in Hilo.

At GeoSciEd II in Hilo, Hawai'i, July 1997: An initial meeting was held on Sunday July 27, following the opening reception of GeoSciEd II at the Hilo Campus of the University of Hawai'i. In attendance were John Carpenter (US), Ian Clark (Australia), Frank Ireton (US), Chris King (UK), Nir Orion (Israel) and Laure Wallace (US). Nir outlined his thoughts for the future. He saw an international organization that would not only instigate future conferences and communicate through a newsletter, but that would also fight for geoscience education internationally and would lend weight to national arguments for geoscience education as part of 'Earth Science for All'. These views were supported by all present, and the discussion continued on how these goals could best be met.

Further discussion centered on how we could identify countries most suitable for hosting future conferences and the mechanisms best suited to developing a newsletter, obtaining articles from a range of people worldwide and disseminating the results. It was decided to use a questionnaire at the conference to gain the views of conference participants and to convene a further meeting when the findings of the questionnaire had been reviewed. The questionnaire was given to all conference participants. The completed questionnaire was returned by 85 participants, including 37 from the US, 8 from the UK, 6 from Australian, 6 from Canada, 4 from Korea and 24 from a range of countries with one or two participants. Seventy-two percent of those who replied (68 people) supported the formation of an international grouping of some kind, 92 percent (79) were keen to have future GeoSciEd conferences and 88 percent (76) indicated that they would find a newsletter useful, with 73 percent (63) being willing to contribute. A number of names of people who might serve on a committee were suggested, as were a number of possible conference venues and individuals who might be involved in hosting future conferences. Names of people who might collect materials for a newsletter and disseminate the newsletter were also recommended.

The working group reconvened and added Mary Dowse (US), Arlie Macedo (Brazil), Alan Morgan (Canada), Professor T. Ondo representing Yoshisuke Kumano (Japan) and Raja Shankar (India) to broaden international representation. As torrential rains thundered on the roof - inches in 12 hours - the key issues were debated. Following the strong endorsement from the conference participants for an association/committee of some form, for future conferences and for a newsletter, the group struggled with a list of questions. What mechanism could be presented to address the goals? What sort of Association should it be? Which venues might be most appropriate for future conferences? How might the newsletter be organized? Who would be part of the committee to organize these things? Who would play key roles in this committee?

After some debate over the most appropriate procedures, the group agreed that a steering committee for a future organization should be formed. This committee would prepare the ground for a future organization and would begin circulation of a newsletter. In this way the groundwork for the formation of an Association/Committee could be laid and formally proposed at GeoSciEd III. A formal constitution would be agreed upon at that time and the committee elected to lead the new organization.

In order to lay the groundwork for this new organization, the following steering committee was agreed upon:

Co-Chair - Nir Orion (Israel)

Co-Chair - Chris King (UK)

Secretary - Ian Clarke (Australia)

Treasurer - Frank Ireton (US)

Newsletter Editor - Laure Wallace

Newsletter Editor - Mary Dowse

Committee Members - Arlie Macedo (Brazil), Alan Morgan (Canada), Yoshisuke Kumano (Japan), Raja Shankar (India)

Advisor - John Carpenter

A general meeting was held with all interested participants at the GeoSciEd II conference. Nir introduced the proceedings, Chris chaired the meeting and Laure laid out the Committee as it was proposed. About 70 percent of the conference participants were present. The key issues were discussed and involved a range of views. The results of these discussion follow: * That a formal association should be proposed at the GeoSciEd II, when a constitution would be agreed and elections of an organizing committee would take place. In the interim, the steering committee would lay the ground work for this new organization. * The official name of the future organization was briefly discussed but deferred. * Possible venues for the next conference were Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Each country was asked to present a formal proposal to the committee and the best proposal would be taken forward. Future conference venues also included Japan, Israel and Scotland. * The mechanism for contributing to the newsletter was agreed and dissemination largely through email was considered effective. Hard copy of the newsletter would be mailed to those without email access.

Ian, as the new secretary, prepared a brief for those offering future conference venues and circulated it to participants from Australia, Canada and New Zealand, with a deadline for a formal proposal submission of mid-September 1997.

With a successful second conference completed, all left in good heart, with a fledgling committee and an embryonic organization, but we also left with a vision for the future and a series of mechanisms to allow us to achieve that vision - a network of geoscience educators supporting one another and developing Earth science education into the 21st century.

I. Aims: The aims of the Association are: To promote geoscience education internationally and at all levels. To work for the enhancement of quality in the international provision of geoscience education: To encourage developments that raise public awareness of geoscience, particularly amongst younger people.

II. Activities: The Association shall: Monitor international provision for geoscience education at all levels. Foster communication between geoscience educators worldwide at all levels. Liaise with international and national bodies concerned with geoscience education. Liaise with international professional geoscience bodies. Liaise with international bodies concerned with science education.

III. Organization: The Association shall be lead by a Committee. Committee Composition - The committee shall consist of an appropriate number of persons, appointed as follows:

- A Chair
- A Vice-Chair;
- A Secretary/Treasurer;
- A Newsletter Editor;
- One member from each country seeking representation on the Committee up to a maximum number to be determined by the Council.

Committee Operation: The Officers shall be elected by the Committee. The Chair shall normally officiate for a term of four years and be appointed at the International Conference.

Committee members shall normally be appointed on a four year basis at the International Conference. Other Committee members may be appointed or coopted.

Observers may attend Committee meetings, but shall not be entitled to vote.

Where Committee members are unable to attend meetings, substitution may be allowed with agreement of the Chair.

The Secretary shall be responsible for notifying the members of meetings and inviting items for the agenda before a meeting. The Secretary will circulate the agenda to members in advance of the meeting. The Secretary shall send the minutes of each meeting to each member within four weeks of the meeting.

Committee Meetings: The Committee shall meet as frequently as reasonable. Non-Committee members may address the Committee on specific topics if the Committee so wishes. The Committee may form fixed term Working Groups or ongoing Subcommittees to deal with special topics.

Committee Duties: Preparation of the succeeding conference. Preparation and dissemination of a newsletter. Representation of geoscience education on an international basis.

Conveners: Malcolm Buck, University of New South Wales Ian Clark, University of South Australia Gary Lewis, Australian Geological Survey Preliminary List of Conference Supporters: University of New South Wales Sydney Universities' Consortium of Geology and Geophysics University of South Australia Australian Geological Survey Organization

Malcolm, Ian and Gary propose to convene the Third International Conference on Geoscience Education ,January 17-20, 2000 at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Kensington, NSW, Australia. The conference will be held on the campus of the University of New South Wales whose facilities include a Central Lecture Theatre Block with up to 8 adjoining lecture theatres, the John Clancy Auditorium, a modern 1000 seat theatre, and the Matthews Pavilion, an enclosed area suitable for posters.

On-campus accommodations include 400 modern studio-equipped rooms with dining facilities. Low cost hotels and motels are also available in the area, all of which are accessible from UNSW by public transport.

The conference will include keynote presentations, general sessions, concurrent workshops and poster presentations. A wide range of pre, mid, and post-conference field trips will be offered.

PROPOSALS BY CANADA TO HOST GEOSCIED III.

Several alternative proposals to host the third conference in Canada were offered by Alan Morgan. Alan proposed that a meeting could be held in Waterloo-Toronto, Ontario in July or August of 2000, or in Calgary, Alberta in 20001. Either of these venues would draw on the Canadian Geoscience Education Network, as well as other national and local groups. Both of these venues would offer excellent opportunities for field trips as well.

LETTER TO MALCOLM BUCK, IAN CLARK, AND GARY LEWIS ACCEPTING THE BID OF AUSTRALIA FOR GEOSCIED III

The Conveners of the Australian Bid for GeoSciEd III, Malcolm Buck, Ian Clark and Gary Lewis.

Dear Colleagues,

No doubt you have been following the email committee debate concerning the bids for GeoSciEd III with great interest and will have detected that the general strength of feeling amongst the Committee was for the Australian bid. As a result, as co-Chairs of the ad hoc committee, we would like to invite you formally, on behalf of the committee and the Geoscience Education establishment to host the next conference in Sydney in January 2000.

This formal invitation is subject to two provisos, that we hope you will be happy to accept:

1. that the local organizing committee should operate beneath an international steering committee that will comprise three Australians and three other international members (the international committee will have a 'steering' role concerning policy matters and will not be involved in day to day organization - they will remain in contact through email); 2. that the local committee should make strenuous efforts to seek funding for overseas participants from developing countries - a very high priority.

If you are happy with these two provisos, then we will be pleased to welcome you on board and will offer you as much support and encouragement as is possible.

Yours sincerely, Chris King and Nir Orion.

RESPONSE FROM AUSTRALIAN COMMITTEE:

Dear Chris and Nir, and the Ad hoc Geoscience Education Committee members

The Australian's, lead by the Conveners Malcolm Buck, Ian Clark and Gary Lewis accept your offer to host GeoSciEd III.

GeoSciEd III, as indicated in our proposal document, will be held at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia, 17 - 20 January 2000. An advertising campaign to that effect is now underway.

We will be happy to work with an International Steering Group, comprised of three Australians and three international members, in respect of policy matters. Although it must be said that we are unaware of what policies exist at this time to consider. However, we are prepared to work together to make GeoSciEd III in Sydney a significant step in building the GeoSciEd conference into a world renowned meeting.

The three Australian members of the Steering Committee will, at this time, be the Conference Conveners Malcolm Buck (m.buck@unsw.edu.au), Gary Lewis (glewis@agso.gov.au) and Ian Clark (ian.clark@unisa.edu.au).

It goes without saying that we will actively seek financial aid to assist participation at GeoSciEd III, especially funding for participants from developing countries. The first meeting of an established organizing committee is to be held on 9 February 1998. A portfolio of one member of the organizing committee will be to seek "sponsorship" for the conference, and travel assistance for participants is included in that portfolio. You can be sure that we will explore this aspect to the depth it deserves.

At this time, the conveners would be happy to receive suggestions from the Ad hoc committee on "session themes" for GeoSciEd III, for the organizing committee to consider.

Please indicate to us, your three other members of the steering committee so that we can establish a dialogue as soon as possible.

Hope we see you in Sydney.

Yours sincerely Malcolm D. Buck Ian Clark Gary Lewis

LETTER TO ALAN MORGAN DECLINING OFFER OF A CANADIAN VENUE FOR GEOSCIED III.

The Conveners of the Canadian Bid for GeoSciEd III, Alan Morgan et al.

Dear Colleagues,

No doubt you have been following the email committee debate concerning the bids for GeoSciEd III with great interest and will have detected that the general strength of feeling amongst the Committee was marginally for the Australian bid. As a result, as co-Chairs of the ad hoc committee, we have invited the Australian conveners to host the conference in Sydney for the year 2000, subject to two provisos. A copy of the letter that has been emailed to them is included below.

However, we hope to allay your disappointment by asking you to host the GeoSciEd IV conference. We have been debating amongst ourselves whether a two year or three year gap between III and IV is most appropriate and would wish to seek your views on this in the light of the two alternative venues you proposed in your impressive bid.

We do hope you will be able to join us in Australia in the year 2000 and then look forward to visiting Canada for the next conference. Please give us your views on appropriate times and venues as soon as you reasonably can.

With best wishes, Chris King and Nir Orion.

RESPONSE FROM ALAN MORGAN:

I am pleased to say that I had a meeting with the Canadian Geoscience Education Network (CGEN for your alphabet soup directory) on Saturday in Vancouver.

CGEN has decided that: (1) I will remain as your contact for the liaison with the Australian Committee in its run-up to 2000.

(2) That the Canadian Committee will be pleased to host GEOED IV in 2002 at a location to be decided.

(3) That I will solicit "bids" to hold the 2002 Meeting "somewhere" in Canada, depending on the outcome of the submissions which will be evaluated by the

Committee at large. I hope that this might be completed by late May, 1998. If not it will be completed in September 1998.

(4) I will communicate to Laure, some of the ongoing Geo-Educational activities on the Canadian scene for the Newsletter ASAP.
