

Message from the 2019 Annual Meeting Host Chair and Technical Program Chair

Greetings all! The 2019 AESE annual meeting, held September 4 to 7 in Regina, Saskatchewan, is done and dusted, and I don't know about you, but I really enjoyed myself! The work put in in advance of the meeting by myself and Karen MacFarlane really paid off, as the icebreaker, technical program, awards banquet and field trip seemed to go off without a hitch. Or at least not too many. (We won't mention the technical glitch that caused us to have to cut off the visual aspect of 'Zoom' and be left with just Matt Grobe's voice during the panel discussion. Or the near-overturning of the bus at one of the first field trip stops – what's an AESE field trip without a near-death experience, right?)

We'd like to thank everyone who made the effort, and, in many cases, the long trip to attend the meeting. For those of you who weren't able to attend, here's a brief sampling of what you missed. (Meg Smath graciously offered to be the official scribe for all sessions of the meeting and will be writing up her detailed notes – look for her write-ups in the next *Blueline*.)

The talks, workshops and tours presented during the meeting covered a variety of topics and included geological as well as editorial subjects. Participants came from Yukon, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Virginia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Wisconsin and California, and represented employees of provincial, state and federal geological surveys, geoscience publishers, and the self-employed. The technical program included a tour of distinctive building stone in Regina's downtown core on the first afternoon, prior to the icebreaker reception. The tour was led by Colin Card and Ryan Morelli, with assistance from Murray Rogers, all Precambrian Research Geologists with the Saskatchewan Geological Survey (SGS). There were over a dozen participants on the tour and, despite the on-and-off drizzle, all thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The buildings clad in Tyndall Stone made a definite impression on at least one of the participants, who emailed me a week or so later to say she had been to a baptism and was certain the church in which the baptism was held was clad in Tyndall Stone, because she recognized the distinctive mottling pattern she had seen on the rock in Regina.

The first full day of the technical program started with welcoming remarks from Gary Delaney, Chief Geologist with the SGS, who was also the first speaker of the day. Gary's talk began with a series of slides to show those who may never have been to the province that Saskatchewan isn't all just flat prairies and wheat fields. The talk then progressed into an overview of the history of geological mapping in the province, and of the evolution of the Saskatchewan Geological Survey. Gary's talk laid down an excellent base for the Saskatchewan-based talks and tours that followed later in the program.

The remainder of the talks on Thursday morning comprised the following:

- Margaret (Meg) Smath, Geologic Editor with the Kentucky Geological Survey (KGS), piloted us on-screen through parts of 'KY Geode', the KGS's online portal to their data, maps and publications. KY Geode links to data on oil and gas, coal, groundwater and minerals; provides access to a photo archive, geospatial data and geotechnical reports; and links to tutorials and data available from other state government agencies.
- Andrea Sharrer, Technical Editor with the *AAPG Bulletin* in Tulsa, Oklahoma, discussed the pros and cons of the bulletin having gone 'print-on-demand'. A couple of the 'pros': no more warehouse stacked with publications that may never be sold; no more staff time devoted to packaging and shipping publications all over the world.
- Linda Deith, Senior Editor for the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey, gave us an overview of 'Trello', the online project management system used by the Wisconsin Survey to enable multiple staff members to input their contribution to a project in the same space, while not overloading the network.

- Karen MacFarlane, Head of Technical Services with the Yukon Geological Survey (YGS), showed us how drones have helped the YGS carry out its mandate in the territory. Video and still photos captured by cameras mounted on YGS's drones have been used to promote the tourism and resource potential of the territory; to help convince concerned groups that exploration activity actually takes up very little land space; and to map the stratigraphy in otherwise hard-to-reach areas of outcrop, and stream and bank exposures.

Thursday afternoon was devoted to a tour of the Saskatchewan Subsurface Geological Laboratory, and presentation of 3-D models in the lab's 3-D viewing room.

- Melinda Yurkowski (Assistant Chief Geologist with the SGS) and Andrew Morley (Petroleum Research Geologist with the SGS) led the tour of the subsurface lab and found out just how inquisitive geoscience editors can be. A tour that Melinda said normally takes half an hour morphed into at least a 50-minute tour due to the questions asked by participants, many of whom were curious about how Saskatchewan's oil and gas laws differed from those in their home state or province.
- Sean Bosman (Precambrian Research Geologist with the SGS) gave a demonstration of the 3-D model of the uranium-rich Athabasca Basin. Again, despite the range of participants' geoscience backgrounds (or perhaps because of?) there were numerous questions and comments from the audience.
- Chao Yang (Petroleum Research Geologist with the SGS) presented the 3-D model of the potash-bearing units of the Prairie Evaporite Formation. As with the Athabasca Basin model, there were many questions from the audience. Following the 3-D model presentation, Dr. Yang brought participants to the core viewing room, where core from the Prairie Evaporite was laid out. She explained what is and what isn't considered ore in the formation, and pointed out the various minerals associated with potash deposits. Again, there was a lot of interest and numerous questions about the core. A few brave souls even licked a piece of core or two to taste for themselves the difference between sylvite and carnallite.

The technical program on Friday morning consisted of the following:

- Michelle Boulton, clear communication strategist with 3c publications of Saskatoon, presented a one-hour workshop titled 'Clear communication by design: A guide to creating effective documents', which included a 16-page booklet as handout and workbook. We were taken through the basics of good document design and then given a couple of exercises to practice what we'd learned.
- Monica Erdman, Geologic Map Editor with the US Geological Survey (USGS) in Menlo Park, California, walked us through the steps taken by editorial staff at the USGS to compile, sort, catalogue, and make available online large collections of geologists' field-based photographs, using as an example the collection of over 70,000 photos amassed by one of their geologists during his 43-year career.
- Balázs Németh, principal geophysicist with BHP in Saskatoon and Editor in Chief of *Interpretation*, a journal co-published by the Society of Exploration Geophysicists and the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, discussed the problems inherent in starting a publication in this age of more online and less hard-copy readership.
- Jillian Bell, Director of Marketing for SaskBooks in Regina, gave us a peek into the complicated world of metadata, and ideas for how we can best use metadata to improve the ability of internet search engines to 'find' our publications.
- Meagan Gilbert, Resident Geologist in the La Ronge office of the SGS, gave a fascinating presentation on the topic of her PhD thesis, showing us how geology and paleontology can shed light on ancient environments, and how her research might eventually help scientists determine how present-day flora and fauna might react to predicted environmental changes.

Friday afternoon's technical sessions included a workshop on editing text to make sentences more useful to readers; an open discussion on the future of the AESE; and a panel discussion on the evolution of the 'open-file' as a provincial, state and federal geological survey publication series. The panel discussion was led by Bob Davie, principal with RnD Technical, a geoscience editing company based in Waterloo, Ontario. Participants on the panel were Kathryn Coyle from the Geological Survey of Canada in Ottawa; Matt Grobe from the Alberta Energy Regulators/Alberta Geological Survey in Edmonton (via Zoom); John Keith of the USGS (emeritus); Marg Rutka from the Ontario Geological Survey in Sudbury, Ontario; and Meg Smath from the Kentucky Geological Survey in Lexington, Kentucky.

The awards banquet on Friday night featured another fascinating presentation by Meagan Gilbert, this time an overview of the geological evolution of Saskatchewan. Meagan explained—with the aid of numerous maps and photos—the tectonic history of the province; where the province was situated throughout geologic time, in a geographic sense; and the changes in vegetation and animal life in the southern part of the province resulting from the shift over time from tropical seacoast, to rain forest, to being almost completely covered by kilometre-thick sheets of ice. All in all, an excellent lead-in to the next day's field trip.

For the field trip on Saturday, Michelle Hanson (Quaternary Research Geologist with the SGS) and Janis Dale (Associate Professor with the Earth Science Department of the University of Regina) took participants on a west-to-east trip through the Qu'Appelle Valley, a 45-minute drive north of Regina. Over the course of the day we learned about the numerous ice sheets that had once covered nearly all of Saskatchewan, and were shown evidence left by some of the most recent ice sheets, including glacial lake plains, 'prairie potholes', eskers, and glacial spillways. The weather was warm and sunny, the scenery spectacular, the stops interesting and educational, and lunch by the shore of Mission Lake in Lebret was a perfect mid-day break.

To cap the meeting off, we went for 'Supper in the Orchard', an optional event on Saturday evening at Over the Hill Orchards and Winery near Lumsden, about 20 minutes' drive north of Regina. The weather that evening was perfect, the setting was gorgeous, and the meal was absolutely fabulous!

Of course, the meeting wouldn't have been a success without the enthusiastic participation of those who attended, so thanks again to them.

Hope to see you all at next year's meeting!

Heather Brown
Karen MacFarlane