

THE GEOCHEMICAL NEWS

Number 1

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The Geochemical News – Number One

The Geochemical Society is now a lusty organization, with approximately 550 members as this goes to press. To keep the membership informed of happenings in their Society and in related areas, our Council has authorized an informal publication to be called the Geochemical News. Responsibility for the news rests (temporarily, we hope) with the Secretary. Please send to him news items or announcements which you feel would be of general interest to our members.

Organization Meeting

For the information of members not present at the historic event, the Geochemical Society was formally organized on November 7, 1955, during the annual meeting of the Geochemical Society of America at New Orleans. The objective, as stated in the newly adopted constitution, is to “encourage the application of chemistry to the solution of geological and cosmological problems”. It was the sense of the organization meeting that this should be interpreted broadly, to include all scientists interested in problems in the earth sciences. Such fields as the following are particularly pertinent: geochemistry of elements and groups of elements, isotope geology, chemistry of meteorites, experimental and theoretical studies of systems of Geochemical interest, chemistry of the hydrosphere and atmosphere, biogeochemistry, and geologic thermometry.

Why a Geochemical Society?

The man best qualified to speak on this question is Earl Ingerson, President of the Society. At the request of the Secretary he prepared the following statement for this issue of the Geochemical News:

Response to invitations to Charter Membership in the Geochemical Society has been most gratifying. It has been less than five months since the first invitations were sent out and the Society already has almost 550 members. All of these are highly qualified professional individuals who are active in several different fields of science. There has not been time for complete returns from other countries, but already there are many members in seventeen countries outside the U.S.A., from India and Japan to Yugoslavia and from Canada to Brazil. In view of this worldwide response it is fortunate that the name Geochemical Society was chosen rather than a more restricted one.

This Favorable response has given a satisfactory answer to questions raised in pre-organization discussions as to whether a society devoted entirely to Geochemistry was necessary or desirable since it was generally agreed that there was not any need for the establishment of another journal in this field. The workers most active in Geochemical

research have, by joining it in large numbers, indicated a belief that there is an important place for such a society and that it should be started now.

This attitude and the need for a specialistic society in geochemistry were predicted long before the organization meeting in New Orleans by people who have been concerned with fellowships and research grants in the earth sciences. They are in agreement that geochemistry is not only one of the most active disciplines but also the one that is growing most rapidly. To them, therefore, it was not a question of whether a geochemical society was called for, but rather of when and where it would be organized, with what other groups it would be associated, and other organizational problems.

No matter how great the initial enthusiasm, however, a society cannot settle down and run on it from year to year. An active and well informed membership and a sound and adequate committee structure must supplement the council in order for the society to operate efficiently and effectively. The committees that have been appointed are assuming their responsibilities promptly and working hard, but they need the opinions, co-operation and encouragement of as large a percentage of the membership as possible. The current committee structure will be given in the second number of the NEWS.

The primary objectives of the society at its inception are:

- 1) To increase and improve educational facilities in geochemistry.
- 2) To foster co-ordination of research in geochemistry and dissemination of information relative thereto.
- 3) To secure the recognition of geochemistry as an independent earth science correlative with geophysics, mineralogy, etc., and to urge the establishment of positions with the title of Geochemist in government bureaus, industrial and endowed research laboratories, universities, etc. A few organizations do this now, but the number is far too small; if it could be made universal the task of getting schools to establish departments and/or curricula in geochemistry as such would be greatly simplified.

If you are in sympathy with these objectives let us know how you think they can best be attained. If you think that there are other things the society should be doing, please suggest them. Then, let's have as large a group as possible at the Annual Meeting in Minneapolis to discuss these and other problems and to give an impetus that will help the Society exceed in the second year the high enthusiasm and success accomplished in the first year.

Agenda of First Council Meeting

Even in so young a society problems arise in profusion. The agenda of the first meeting of the Council included discussions of the relation of the Geochemical

Society to other scientific societies in the United States and abroad; the appointment of committee members and definition of the duties of the committees; the desirability of sponsoring a journal; qualifications for membership, and consideration of various possible classes of membership.

The Geochemical Society has requested affiliation with the Division of Earth Sciences of the National Research Council, the American Geological Institute, and the Geological Society of America. The G.S.A., at its April Council Meeting, voted to designate the Geochemical Society as an Associated Society, the same relation enjoyed by the Mineralogical Society of America. The Board of Directors of the A.G.I. has voted to admit the Society as a Member Organization, but for the action to become final it must be ratified by two-thirds of the present Member Organizations. Meetings of the Geochemical Society will for the most part be held concurrently with the G.S.A. and M.S.A., and representatives of the Geochemical Society will sit with the joint program committee for these meetings.

Various Geochemical organizations are sprouting in other parts of the world. Members of our Society in Great Britain plan to organize a British or Western European section of the Geochemical Society, to hold local meetings from time to time. The Council unanimously approved formation of this section of the Society. Geochemical societies have been organized in France and Japan. The Societe Francaise de Geochimie will welcome foreign members. The President is M. Raguin, Professor at l'Ecole des Mines de Paris, and the Secretary is M. Cailleau, Professor at l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Paris. M. Blondel, 12 rue de Bourgogne, Paris 7e, has very kindly offered to sponsor any of the members of our Geochemical Society who wish to join.

Shinya Oana, Institute of Earth Sciences, Nagoya University Nagoya, is Secretary of the Geochemical Society of Japan. The Society will issue English translations of abstracts for the papers given at their meetings and symposia. Annual dues are ¥100, but it has not yet been decided whether foreign members will be accepted.

The Council discussed at length the question of establishing or designating an official journal. *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta* is at present the only journal devoted entirely to geochemistry. Its editors are members of the Geochemical Society and the publisher is willing to have the journal designated as the official publication of the Geochemical Society. The sense of the Council was, however, that problems of editorial control, price and accessibility should first be investigated. In the meantime the publisher of *Geochimica Acta* have offered the journal to Geochemical Society members at \$5.00 per volume. A flat rate of \$10.00 per year, regardless of number of volumes published, will go into effect for members if 250 subscribe. This is a saving now of nearly \$10.00 per year over the current price of \$9.80 per volume; if three volumes per year are issued, as now seems likely, the savings will be either \$15.00 or \$20.00 per year, depending on the number of member-subscribers. A notice has been mailed to members, asking that they inform Earl Ingerson of their intentions

concerning subscription to the *Geochemica Acta*. If you haven't already done so, please notify Earl at the U.S. Geological Survey, Washington 25, D.C. as to whether you will subscribe at the \$10.00 per year or the straight \$5.00 per volume rate. Members may take advantage of the \$5.00 per volume subscription rate immediately. Send checks to Pergamon Press, 122 East 55th St., New York 22, N.Y., and state that you are a member of the Geochemical Society.

The constitution and by-laws adopted at the organization meeting stipulate that there shall be only one type of general membership and that any person who is qualified to advance the objectives of the society is eligible for membership. This directive poses a number of problems in establishing qualifications for membership. As one council member remarked, any person willing to pay his two dollars dues was in a sense furthering the objectives of the Society! The fundamental decision which must be made concerns our philosophy of the function of the Society. Should it be a society requiring high standards of professional attainment, comparable to fellowship in the G.S.A. or membership in the S.E.G.; or should it admit virtually all men concerned with the general field of geochemistry in an effort to broaden public awareness of geochemistry? Cogent arguments can be advanced for both views. The two are certainly mutually exclusive if only one class of membership is provided. The Council felt the matter should be explored thoroughly and deliberately by the newly appointed membership committee. It is anticipated that further discussion will follow the committee report at the annual business meeting of the Society in Minneapolis this Fall.

Charter membership applications will be received by George Faust until July 1. Please help us pass the word to all interested persons.

Future Issues

Issue number two of the *Geochemical News*, to be published shortly, will contain copies of the constitution and by-laws of our society, lists of committees, and a notice regarding papers to be delivered at the annual meeting in Minneapolis, October 31 through November 2.

Remember – we now have an official publication. Send notices or other pertinent information to the Secretary.

John C. Maxwell
Secretary

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