

AESE Joins GSA for Annual Meeting

Heather M Nevill

This year's annual meeting of the Association of Earth Science Editors (AESE) was held in conjunction with the Geological Society of America (GSA) annual meeting and exposition at the Washington State Trade and Convention Center in downtown Seattle. The AESE annual meeting began on 1 November 2003 with a field trip to Mount Rainier. US Geological Survey hydrologist Carolyn Driedger led the field trip. The high cost of tickets for the field trip and AESE awards banquet prevented many AESE members from attending these events. Last year, those events were included in the price of conference registration. The technical sessions officially began on 2 November.

To me, a geoscience editor, the Geoscience Information Society GeoRef Users Group and Digital Forum was very informative. This session covered the history of GeoRef (an online geoscience reference database), information on vendors and bundling, update schedules and features, and GeoRef's future growth possibilities.

AESE conducted its popular Digital Publishing Techniques—Fundamentals for Earth Science Editors as a technical session in two parts: Part I: Editing and Publishing Digital Maps and Part II: Editing and Publishing Digital Texts. In the first half of the session, discussion included converting paper map products to electronically produced and delivered formats and the challenges associated with those tasks. This session also detailed new advancements such as online map editing, Internet map serving, CD publication, and the creation of derivative map products through GIS technology and explored problems such as unmanageable file sizes, software problems,

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Seattle's downtown skyline is highlighted by the Space Needle, which towers 605 feet above the Seattle Center.

product archiving, differences between print and Web map versions, and the need for metadata.

The annual meeting had several outstanding sessions. The most informative session was GSA Topical Session T46, Challenges in Geoscience Publishing: The Insiders' Perspectives. The session was cochaired by Monica Easton, GSA Coordination Committee chair, and Carol Ruthven, AESE president. Many speakers with various ties to the process of publishing—author, educator, historian, or editor—presented their unique perspectives. Easton explored ethical issues in geoscience publishing, such as unintentional plagiarism (inadequate referencing), salami publishing, conflicts of interest, breaches of confidentiality, and sloppiness in manuscript reviews. Gail Ashley, of the Geological Sciences Department at Rutgers University, discussed the importance of a good review for the author from the (sometimes conflicting) perspectives of the editor and the peer reviewer. Catherine O'Riordan, of the American Geophysical Union (AGU), emphasized the importance of thorough peer review by scientists, interested members of the public, and, at times,

lawyers when peer-reviewed science will be used outside the scientific community. Judy Holoviak, also of AGU, described the fundamental differences between print and electronic journals, including archiving, format, cost, and presentation. Thomas Overton, of the Geological Institute of America, presented information on copyright law in the digital age, including such recent relevant cases as *New York Times v Tasini* and *Greenberg v National Geographic*. Connie Oehring, managing editor of *Arctic, Antarctic, and Alpine Research*, published by the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research (INSTAAR), presented the pros and cons of INSTAAR's transition from print to electronic format. Joseph Hannibal, of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, explained the importance of page citations in geologic and biologic science manuscripts for decreasing plagiarism and increasing the quality of research. Author Kevin Krajick used his book *Barren Lands* as a model to explain how journalists can use storytelling to keep readers interested and to explain complex scientific ideas. Another author, Susan Cummins Miller, described how she teaches geology through mystery writing. Patrick McKeever, of the

Geological Survey of Northern Ireland, presented information on the European Geoparks Network and explained how areas in Europe are creating geoparks to revitalize local economies and create interest in geologic heritage. Alun David Lewis, of the Royal Holloway University of London, expressed the need to teach scientists how to present their research to the public in creative and entertaining ways. A J VanLoon, of Geocom, discussed a project in which he translated difficult scientific texts into material easily read by the general public.

The second half of the session concentrated on problems, procedures, and new technologies encountered in editing digital texts for Web and CD publication. Dave Jackson, Web master of *www.aese.org*, described how he redesigned AESE's Web site, reshaping it from a frame-built site to a dynamically built site that includes an advanced Web search portal. Deborah

DeChurch, of the Indiana Geological Survey, presented the challenges associated with creating a digital publication from scratch and highlighted the differences between digital publication and traditionally structured print form in how the digital text was compiled and presented. Jennifer Rumford, electronic publications specialist for the Ocean Drilling Program and managing editor of the online journal *Palaeontologia Electronica*, discussed scalable vector graphic (SVG) technology and its possible uses and limitations. Norman MacLeod, editor emeritus of *Palaeontologia Electronica*, outlined the editing process for the journal, which uses the talents of editors on three continents and embraces such new media as three-dimensional animation and voice technology.

Other AESE technical sessions, such as Geohazards: Informing the Public and Communicating to the Public: Geologic Displays, Guidebooks, and Signs, concen-

trated on the different ways to present geologic information to the public. The first of those two addressed the importance of not only reporting the results of geohazards but also explaining the underlying causes and preventive measures to minimize or prevent damage. The second focused on ways to bring geology to life by using such media as displays, films, pamphlets, guidebooks, wayside signs, and guided tours.

Throughout the annual meeting, the GSA exhibit hall was open to conference registrants. Geology departments of major universities were represented and scattered among booths staffed by representatives of geologic institutions and full of geologic keepsakes, scientific instruments, cartographers, and books. The annual meeting ended after the AESE annual board meeting and the conclusion of the GSA technical sessions on 5 November. 🌐