

# Country Roads Take AESE to West Virginia

## Meg Smath

The 2005 Association of Earth Science Editors meeting at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, showcased many of the sights that John Denver sang about in “Take Me Home, Country Roads”. Nestled in a wooded setting surrounded by the Appalachians, the training center proved the perfect spot for idea-sharing, networking, and appreciating the beauty of the Potomac River Valley.

The meeting, hosted by John Keith, of the US Geological Survey (USGS), got under way with the board of directors meeting and a welcoming reception on Tuesday, 6 September. Technical sessions began on Wednesday, preceded by a breakfast for state, provincial, and national survey editors, during which accomplishments, innovations, and frustrations were shared.

Technical Session I, chaired by Pierrette Tremblay and Lisa Pinsker, was titled “From Scratch: What It Takes to Start a Brand New Publication”. Stephen Cole, of the American Geophysical Union described AGU’s new online journal, *Space Weather*, which was launched in October 2003. Warren Allmon, director of the Paleontological Research Institution, outlined the evolution of the museum’s magazine, *American Paleontologist*, as it progressed from a newsletter aimed primarily at professionals, students, and serious amateurs to a glossy format that is somewhere between a national newsmagazine and a members’ magazine similar to those produced by most natural-history museums. Tremblay, managing editor, discussed the launch of *Elements—An International Magazine of Mineralogy, Geochemistry, and Petrology* in 2005. It is published by seven

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mineralogic societies in the United States, Canada, and Europe; more societies are expected to join the collaboration in 2006. Alan Cutler, author of *Seashell on the Mountaintop: A Story of Science, Sainthood, and the Humble Genius Who Discovered a New History of the Earth*, finished the first session with an entertaining talk, “Writing and Publishing a Book on Science for Nonscientists: How I Tried to Put Meat in My Book and Meat on the Table at the Same Time”.

Technical Session II, “Marketing Yourself and Your Ideas”, was chaired by Alma Hale Paty and Pinsker. Mary Hanson, the extremely energetic executive officer of the National Science Foundation Office of Legislative and Public Affairs, described the reinvention of the NSF Web site as a vehicle to get news about agency-funded research out to the public. Carol Raulston, senior vice president of communications for the National Mining Association, spoke about how the association has revised its communications strategy on the basis of results of nationwide surveys in 2002 and 2005, in which it found out what the public wanted to know about mining, not just what mining wanted to communicate to the public. Paty, who founded her own consulting business, A Capital Resource, finished the session with her talk, “Freelance Marketing: Low Tech Still Works!” She feels that the personal touch in marketing ideas and talents wins out over more remote electronic communication.

Wednesday’s final session was “Map Production: Challenges in Editing and Publishing”, chaired by Mindy James and Diane Lane. Peter Schweitzer, of USGS, gave tips on reviewing and editing geospatial metadata. A theme throughout his presentation was enforcing consistency. Jane Freed described the process that the Idaho Geological Survey uses to produce maps, which has allowed them to move from xerographically reproduced black-

and-white maps to print-on-demand color maps. All maps are also available online as PDF files. Finally, Elizabeth Koozmin and Will Stettner, of USGS, discussed the evolution of map-editing and cartographic-production techniques in the production of several large, complicated geologic maps, which they referred to as “legacy maps”.

Thursday began with a breakfast for freelancers, at which the participants discussed how they got into freelancing, the types of clients they have, and how they manage their businesses. Technical Session IV, “New Challenges in Electronic Publishing”, chaired by Rex Buchanan and Pinsker, followed the breakfast. Michael Jensen, director of publishing technologies at the National Academies Press, explained how the press has implemented open-access publishing. Don Hemenway, executive director of *GeoScienceWorld.org*, discussed managing this nonprofit corporation formed by a group of leading geoscientific organizations to make geoscience research and related information easily and economically available via the Internet. Sharon Tahirkheli, director of information systems for the American Geological Institute, discussed copyright as it is related to open-access publishing, the Open Source Initiative, Creative Commons, and the Google Print Project. These collaborative environments offer a new form of copyright that encourages sharing while providing some protection to authors. Fred Spilhaus delivered Judy Holoviak’s talk, “Electronic Publishing—The Interesting Times”, in her absence. These interesting times give rise to many questions, perhaps the most important of which is, Are we preparing adequately for the day print goes away?

The final technical session began with a panel discussion, chaired by Barb Richman and Gail Wendt, in which Lisa Rossbacher (Southern Polytechnic State University), Hanson, Kathleen Gohn (USGS), and

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Linda Jacobsen (USGS), whose remarks were delivered by Wendt, considered the edge that editors have in the services they can offer and the careers they can explore. This was followed by three breakout sessions. Bill Rose and Mary Eberle led interested participants in “Freelancing: Vagaries and Vicissitudes”, Karen McFarlane led the session “Levels of Edit: Determining

How Much Effort Is Required to Save an Author’s Reputation”, and Pinsker led “Juggling Multiple Audiences”.

On Friday morning, the meeting wrapped up with a field trip led by Elizabeth Koozmin and Scott Southworth, which explored the geology and natural and cultural history of the Potomac River Valley. Participants visited Harpers Ferry

and saw the building in which John Brown was captured and the ruins of navigation canals dug by George Washington, along with a few geologic puzzles.

The 2006 meeting is planned for San Diego in October. Please join us! Visit [www.aese.org](http://www.aese.org) to learn more about the organization. 