

CGRG NEWSLETTER NO. 3 (July 1995) - HIGHLIGHTS

The arrival of the most recent issue of our newsletter today provides a welcome update for those of us unable to attend the special CGRG sessions in St. John's, Newfoundland in early June. Given that not all members of CANGEORG are presently members of CGRG, I thought I should put together a brief overview of some of the items touched upon in the newsletter. My apologies to CGRG members who will receive this electronic version of the newsletter in addition to the paper version crafted by Bernard Lauriol, University of Ottawa.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Paul Egginton

As president of the Canadian Geomorphology Research Group (CGRG), I would like to thank all of you who have joined us in the last year. Those who were able to attend our first annual meeting, held jointly with CANQUA (Canadian Quaternary Association) on June 5-7, 1995, in St. John's Nfld, by all accounts enjoyed themselves and found the sessions, posters and field excursions lively and interesting. Congratulations to the organizing committee, session leaders, staff and students at Memorial University who made the meeting so enjoyable. CGRG looks forward to having another session with CANQUA in the not too distant future.

The CGRG sponsored special session "Geomorphological Tests and Constraints in Ice Sheet Modelling" organized by Art Dyke and its associated poster session were well attended and received. Colleagues that I ran into days after the meeting were still talking about the special session and its implications for future research. Discussions are extremely healthy for the discipline and CGRG is very pleased to provide a forum for such debate. Our goal is to continue to provide this type of forum, on a wide variety of geomorphic topics, on at least an annual basis. At the St. John's meeting the CGRG constitution was ratified by its members, completing a process that started several years ago. Art Dyke and John Shaw, members of the original committee that oversaw the creation of the CGRG and the CNC/IAG, have now stepped down from the executive. The CGRG sends sincere thanks to them for their efforts over the past four years.

I encourage all CGRG members to attend the 1996 CGRG annual meeting that will be held jointly with the Canadian Association of Geographers in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. I look forward to seeing you there.

(Partial) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER: Greg Brooks

As most member have undoubtedly discovered, e-mail is among the most useful tool at their disposal. Unfortunately, we have the e-mail address of very few CGRG members in our records. In an effort to rectify this, we are asking you to forward your e-mail address to us so that we can update our membership list. Please send your e-mail address to cgrg@gsc.emr.ca.

NEW AWARD FROM CGRG: Paul Egginton

The CGRG is in the process of creating a new award that recognizes excellence in geomorphic research. The concept was approved at our annual meeting and J. Ross Mackay has graciously agreed to lend his name to the award. The 'J. Ross Mackay' award will be given each year to a geomorphologist who is deemed to have significantly advanced the discipline in the ten year period following their graduation. Brian Luckman has been asked to chair the first committee and establish suitable criteria for granting the award.

JOINT CAG/CGRG MEETING, MAY 11-16, 1996

The CGRG is planning to sponsor at least two special sessions in conjunction with the Canadian Association of Geographers 1996 Annual Meeting in Saskatoon. A three and half-day pre-meeting field trip is also planned which will take participants through the semi-arid core of the Palliser Triangle and across the Cypress Hills. The number of participants will be limited.

The First Circular for the CAG/CGRG meeting will be distributed in December. To ensure that you receive a circular contact the local CAG Committee representative Alec Aitken (aitkenae@sask.usask.ca) for conference information.

1. GLOBAL CHANGE IN THE PALLISER TRIANGLE:

This special session takes an applied perspective to geomorphic research through examination of the physical impacts of climate change in the southern Canadian prairies. Initial emphasis will be placed on Holocene paleoclimatic records and then

shift to various components of the geomorphic system. Contact Don Lemmen(lemmen@gsc.emr.ca) for more information on this session.

2. AEOLIAN RESEARCH IN NORTH AMERICA:

This session will provide an opportunity to discuss issues regarding aeolian processes in Canada and the United States. The session will be structured to ensure that there will be ample time for discussion and debate. Contact Steve Wolfe (swolfe@gsc.emr.ca) for more information.

SPECIAL SESSIONS AT FUTURE MEETINGS

The 1997 CGRG meeting will be held in Ottawa, Ontario, in conjunction with the Geological Association of Canada (GAC). We are looking for volunteers interested in organizing special sessions for this meeting. Anyone interested in organizing a special session should contact Greg Brooks (brooks@gsc.emr.ca).

NORTHERN RESEARCH AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT - PCSP:

Paul Egginton

Many CGRG members work in the High Arctic and rely heavily on logistical support from Polar Continental Shelf Project(PCSP)/Geological Survey of Canada (GSC). The current round of downsizing in government has seen PCSP resources dwindle. At the CANQUA-CGRG meeting and at other national meetings held this year, considerable concern was expressed over the ability of University Researchers, in particular to maintain projects in the north, if grants from PCSP were reduced. Quite simply put, university researchers have on other 'pots to tap' and NSERC grants were deemed by most as not adequate to support northern research.

At a recent meeting Jim Franklin, GSC's chief scientist, revealed that GSC is seeking to stabilize funding/logistical support available to University Researchers through PCSP at about \$800,000 per year. This will be accomplished in part by charging logistical support back to GSC projects and the projects of other government agencies.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GEOMORPHOLOGISTS:

Olav Slaymaker

Interim report of the task force on promotion of geomorphology. The following is a summary of responses received to date by the committee. It is in no sense final and suggestions for additions or subtractions should be sent toolav@unixg.ubc.ca.

A. THE ESSENTIAL AND UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS OF GEOMORPHOLOGY

1. Geomorphology as the science of landforms: a) focuses on the interface between lithosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, atmosphere and society; b) provides systematic landform classification; c) provides regional inventories of landforms and landform associations; d) provides understanding of landform process-response systems and the functional interaction of their components; e) provides understanding of strength of materials, both unconsolidated regolith and bedrock, insofar as their resistance influences the nature and rate of landform change; f) provides knowledge about the effects of system input changes (such as crustal movements, changes in climate and in land use activities) and their effect upon the evolution and present-day appearance of landforms.

2. Geomorphology as a contribution to major contemporary and social political questions; a) the internationalism of knowledge. There is increasingly free flow of intellectual property and ideas across national and international boundaries. Geomorphology participates in this process in the "normal" scientific way through international journals, exchanges of faculty and graduate students and in the fostering of associations such as the IAG. Less conventional ways include: electronic communication-via e-mail, fax networks, and the Internet- and active involvement in international programmes, both research and entrepreneurial; b) the information age revolution: The Information Age places emphasis on spatial data; its acquisition, electronic processing, display via Geographic Information Systems, interpretation, communication to as many interested parties as possible and, importantly, using the foregoing to take action to mitigate environmental problems. Such developments have allowed the geomorphologist to communicate information about morphology and environmental change to decision-makers whether politicians, planners or managers; c) Fitness of Planet Earth: In the face of increasing population densities and more powerful earth-moving machinery, a heightened sensitivity to the need for stewardship of the environment is a major social force in our time. The processes of environmental change unleashed by humans are now cumulatively and globally of greater magnitude than the biogeophysical processes. Global environmental change at all spatial scales, is now of absorbing interest, and the geomorphologist is in demand as an interpreter of that change; d) Sustainability: Since the appearance of the Brundland Commission Report (1987), much national and international policy has been couched in terms of sustainability. Although there is incomplete agreement on the meaning of the term, the following five dimensions are included as ingredients necessary to the survival of a system: 1) increased

understanding of the functioning of the system; 2) priority given to the solution of problems that are socially relevant; 3) preservation of a full range of options, for present and future generations; 4) genuine concern for equity and ethical practice; and 5) flexibility, with sensitivity to policy and institutional change. The sustainability of geomorphology will presumably be improved by: defining one or more central organizing concepts; developing our discipline as an environmental and earth science system; increasing our problem focus; and expressing deeper interest in public policy.

B. PROPOSED ACTIONS.

After feedback on Section A of this report, the IA taskforce recommends the following actions:

1. Identify target audiences and re-word for each audience our agreed statement on geomorphology.
2. Develop documentary films, exhibitions, press conferences, articles for the print media, and radio and TV interviews;
3. Emphasize the value of geomorphology as a useful science worth distinguishing from geology and geography, but nevertheless strongly attached to those disciplines, and as a member of the earth and environmental science family;
4. Encourage the production of high quality books, both popular and scholarly.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUTURE CGRG NEWSLETTERS

The CGRG welcomes contributions to future newsletters from any of our members. These should be of interest to the Canadian geomorphology community and could include discussions, commentaries, reviews and announcements of future meetings or workshops. Please forward your contributions to Bernard Lauriol or cgrg@gsc.emr.ca.