

Pyroclasts: AGID: Seven Years After

Ward Neale

Volume 8, Number 3, September 1981

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/geocan8_3fea02

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The Geological Association of Canada

ISSN

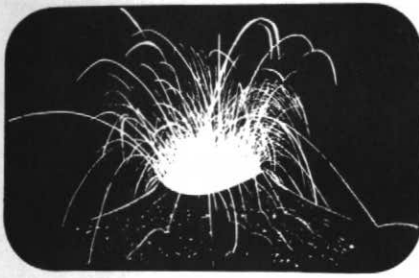
0315-0941 (print)

1911-4850 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Neale, W. (1981). Pyroclasts: AGID: Seven Years After. *Geoscience Canada*, 8(3), 135–136.



Pyroclasts

Ward Neale

AGID: Seven Years After

It is hard to believe that the large and thriving Association of Geoscientists for International Development, born in Canada, was only seven years old at the time of the GAC/MAC May meeting in Calgary. AGID was established in 1974 to forge global links between geoscientists who desired to use their skills to greater effect for improving conditions in developing countries. The organization grew from Canadian initiatives: a symposium at the 1972 IGC meeting in Montreal; a proposal in 1973 by Tony Berger and Duncan Derry to the IUGS to establish such an international association (a proposal ignored or deferred at that time); then a meeting in St. John's in 1974 that was sponsored by the Canadian Geoscience Council and generously funded by CIDA and other organizations. The St. John's meeting ended with endorsement of the new international association and the rest is history.

This short history of accomplishment and success has been compiled by D.R. (Rob) de Vletter and A.R. (Tony) Berger in an attractive booklet "AGID: the First Six Years". It chronicles the increasing pace of activities as membership increased from the original 60 geoscientists from 20 countries to the more than 1200 from 95 countries who make up the present membership.

From its inception, AGID issued a spiritedly quarterly Newsletter, until recently under the editorship of the late Leo Heindl, which can now be found in technical libraries all over the world. Also, during its first six months of existence, it staged its first workshop "Groundwater Research in Arid and Semi-arid Zones" and promptly published the proceedings. Since then it has staged many workshops and symposia, on subjects such as Mineral Development Resource Management, Earth Science Education, Storage and Retrieval of Data, Exploration Techniques in Rain Forests, Geology of Tin Deposits,

Engineering Geology and Small Scale Mining. These have been held in appropriate places, e.g. Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Malaysia, Thailand, Venezuela, Bolivia arranged and managed by geoscientists from those countries; and usually associated with special training courses for the registrants from other developing countries. Many other projects are flourishing: e.g. the book exchange, handled by John Moore of Carleton University; a directory of geoscience departments in universities of developing countries; preparation of a guide to mineral resource development by John Carman (ex UNDP); and maintenance of a personnel data bank.

This brief history does not restrict itself to describing the AGID successes, it also devotes a chapter to honestly detailing and analyzing the problems and failures of the past six years, and another chapter to bold and innovative plans for the future.

Initially AGID headquarters were in St. John's. In those first years, the very competent and personable first president, Deborah Ajakaiye (a Nigerian geophysicist) was supported by Canadians such as Tony Berger and Roger Blais. Headquarters later shifted to Venezuela for a few years and is now in Bangkok, Thailand. It is cheering to note, however, that Canadian geoscientists (back at home and abroad) still remain very actively involved in this association. Whenever I become discouraged with the Canadian Geoscience Council because its diverse membership cannot seem to reach agreement on one important national issue or another, I recollect how the councillors of a few years ago managed to submerge their suspicions and vested interests in order to unanimously sponsor the founding meeting of AGID. Also, whenever I think or hear derogatory things about CIDA, I recall that it is still a major supporter of AGID and, hence, cannot be all bad!

Obtain a copy of "AGID: The First Six Years" for your library. And talk your mining or petroleum company employer into becoming (for a modest sum) an institutional supporting member of AGID. For details write AGID, c/o Asian Institute of Technology, P.O. Box 2754, Bangkok, Thailand.

An Analysis by Some Amazing Shrink's A 295 page report entitled "The Shrinking Maze" was produced by a nine person program review committee at University of Calgary. It peers into the university's past, analyzes its present activities and lays out some broad guidelines for the future. I have only two excuses for bringing it to reader's attention: (1) A geolo-

gist, Fin Campbell, was one of the authors; (2) The recent CGC study of geology and geophysics departments suggested that many of those who responded to questionnaires did not know how or why universities functioned (and even, in a few cases, where they were located). Here is a new university laying its soul bare (well almost) in very readable form. For five bucks (prepaid, University Bookstore) why not become an expert, instead of sniping from a background of ignorance?

The first chapter deals partly with universities in the national context and concludes that whatever the outcome of the current constitutional talks, the only hope for universities is a balance of accountability and "arms length" freedom to fail or succeed within responsible fiscal limits. A swing too far in either direction could lead to irresponsibility or repression. The chapter also deals with the Alberta context - gradually falling enrolments yet increasing need for highly qualified manpower. Part of the reason is that many good Alberta students are lured to other universities and equivalent counterparts are not attracted to Alberta. The answer to this and some other problems is stated to be a huge injection of Heritage Funds into scholarships, research grants and library facilities. In the few months since the report was written some of these funds have materialized.

Chapter 2, on planning and management, gives the outsider a glimpse into academic democracy at work. The planning committee is very representative which means it is very large (27) and hence, very slow - it took over four years to approve the first five year plan! The new position allocation policy is also described which permits some flexibility in a no-growth situation where 80 per cent of the budget is devoted to salaries. A retiring professor is no longer replaced in the same unit, e.g., in 1979-80 Education lost 4 and Fine Arts 3 positions whereas Engineering, Science, Management and Nursing all gained. A discussion of evaluation processes, always of interest to the non-academic critic, reveals that presidential task forces have examined five faculties in the past five years and are now at work on a sixth. These reports are made public and one of them which was severely critical of Education resulted in press pillory of that unfortunate Faculty. I doubt if this method is anywhere nearly as effective as the regular visits by external committees to some geology departments (as described in the CGC report) but it is a functioning evaluation program which should open the eyes of those who continuously

accuse universities of being closed shops.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the 16 faculties. It provides enrolment statistics: Calgary had 9805 full time undergrads and 933 full time grads in 1979-80 and 6789 undergrads and 990 grads in part-time studies. Also, individual faculties are covered in some detail from the viewpoints of history, organization, role, enrolments, research and a concluding section of observations and recommendations, e.g., *that implementation of the expanded geophysics program be an institutional priority.*

A chapter on people and resources focuses on all those topics that everyone wishes to know about but is afraid to ask: students, faculty, support, teaching and research. Problems are aired and some sound recommendations made, e.g. the need for a written description of the way a faculty applies the criteria (teaching, scholarship, service), to promotion and tenure. And, also, the way in which individual departments interpret the criteria. *There is also some good advice on strengthening the position of department head so that those with academic credibility and leadership ability will apply. All good stuff.*

The final chapter is entitled a "Decade for the Development of Excellence". Liberally laced with quotations it is a scholarly piece of work that will convert those who feel that universities are remiss in not providing more courses in core logging, drafting and survey methods. It concludes with this recommendation: "That the University of Calgary, while recognizing its complex relationship with and responsibilities to the society which supports its efforts, reaffirm the concepts of pedagogical autonomy and the mandates of universities as broadly educational, rather than narrow vocational training institutes".

I found out a good deal about the problems, frustrations and aspirations, not only of this university but of all universities by reading the *Shrinking Maze*. If other universities have published similar analyses of themselves, let us hear about them from readers. Meanwhile send off for your copy of this one.

Notes on a Recent Visit to Toronto

The University of Toronto has one notice board strictly reserved for society announcements with individual spaces reserved for GAC, MAC, CIM, CGU, CSPG, KEGS, CSEG, etc. A good method of keeping students informed of the activities of our several professional societies (and the whereabouts of application forms).

Tom Krogh at R.O.M. has perfected a method of knocking the rough edges of zircons and claims he can now date Archean rocks within 2 m.y.

Fred Wicks and Joe Mandarino at R.O.M. feel that it is high time that CGC embarked on a study of geoscience museums across the country to let us know where they are, what they are doing and what they should be doing. I heartily agree - until a visit to McGill in June, I had no idea, for example, that the famous old Redpath Museum had been closed to the public for years.

Academic Bereft of Ideas

I was chatting with Terry Bottrill at the GAC/MAC meeting about industrial support of academic research. As some of you know, until recently he administered one of the most enlightened and unrestricted funds concerned with applied research in Geoscience (Volume 8, No. 1, 1981). He claims that his biggest disappointment was the lack of bright, new ideas and even the general lack of interest shown by academics in his company's generous granting system. To his surprise, he found himself having to sell ideas to professors and then enticing them to apply for support of those very ideas. If Terry is right it makes one wonder a little about all those pleas for help that we hear from university researchers.

The Calgary GAC/MAC

- Glen Caldwell completed his very active term as GAC president with an expectedly first-rate presidential address in which he showed the links between the 'new' stratigraphy and most other subdisciplines of the geosciences.
- Norah Allman assumed the GAC presidency - probably the first woman to become chief honcho in any national geoscience society anywhere.
- Bill Fyfe (Western Ontario) won the Logan Medal plus a glowing citation from President Caldwell that should have made the occasion memorable even for one who has received Bill's countless honours and awards.
- Dirk Templeman-Kluit (GSC) tectonist, latter-day ophioliteologist and irreverent west coast activist won the Past President's Medal.
- Don Sangster (GSC) received the coveted Duncan Derry Medal of the Mineral Deposit Division.

- Fin Campbell, Ian Hutcheon and their many associates breathed sighs of relief as they accepted congratulations for a fine meeting. Attendance was about 1350; the weather was good despite heavy pre-meeting snowfalls; slides and presentations much better than usual. Although they produced the most expensive field guidebook in the world (\$35,000.00) predictions are that the meeting will break even financially.
- Cheers to Gerry Osborne who conceived, wrote and directed the musical comedy "The Wonderful Wizard of GAC/MAC" that entertained 500 who partook at a barbecue in a tent on a frosty night at Heritage Park. Geolog is presently in competition with the New Yorker and Penthouse for rights to publish the unexpurgated script and songs. Our guess is that Geolog will win out so watch for it in the next issue.

MS received June 19, 1981.

Geological Association of Canada
Association Géologique du Canada

Western and Arctic Canadian Biostratigraphy

Percival Sydney Warren Memorial Volume

Edited by C.R. Stelck and B.D.E. Chatterton
Geological Association of Canada
Special Paper 18

This book, which includes 16 papers from a symposium of the same name, contains papers of biostratigraphic interest ranging in age from the Ordovician through to the Tertiary.

ISBN 0-919216-12-9

Order from:
Geological Association of Canada
Business and Economic Service Ltd.
111 Peter Street, Suite 509
Toronto, Ontario M5V 2H1

**GAC Members \$18.50,
Non-Members \$22.00**

(Please add \$2.50 for postage and handling after July 1, 1981).
