

Central Canada Geological Conference

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Central Canada Geological Conference

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The inaugural meeting of the CCGC was held at the University of Western Ontario, 22-23 February 1988. These conferences are designed to provide an opportunity for graduate students to present their research as oral papers or posters, and thus meet others who have similar research interests. About 80 people registered, including 65 students, and 33 communications were presented, of which 25 were oral papers. In addition, talks by six invited speakers were interspersed with the other papers in the two-day program. A book of abstracts was available at the meeting. Twenty minutes were scheduled for most papers, and there was a fair amount of discussion following the papers, as well as the usual informal exchanges over refreshments. The conference was scheduled for "slack week" and all major graduate schools in Ontario were well represented (with the notable exception of McMaster!), as well as several in Quebec and nearby States.

The conference was well planned by a committee of nine graduate students, chaired by Brett Norris. The registration fee was \$25, which included free coffee, doughnuts, and a cold buffet-style dinner on Monday night — so clearly it was well subsidized by its sponsors, which included the University of Western Ontario and the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists. CSPG also offered an award for the best student presentation, which was won by Clinton Cowan (Queen's University) for a paper on "Evidence for hydrothermal spelean Mississippi Valley Type mineralization: banded fluorite rhythmites of Southern Illinois".

The range of topics covered by the conference was quite diverse, ranging from environmental and groundwater studies, through petrology, metallogeny, palynology, allostratigraphy, and sedimentology, to structural geology and large-scale tectonics. It even included a paper on how graduate students could improve as TAs and themselves profit from the experience. The level

of oral presentation was generally very high: colour graphics, of a type once thought to be restricted to rich oil company employees, were used lavishly. Almost no slides were illegible and all speakers were audible (with the possible exception of one of the invited speakers!). Luckily, the program was not crowded, otherwise a more rigorous enforcement of the time limits would have been necessary (the program ran as much as an hour behind schedule).

In reporting such a diverse conference, it would probably be invidious to single out any particular contributions for special discussion (those who hunger for details can obtain the Abstract Volume by sending \$10 to the Department of Geology at UWO). Your correspondent will therefore report only that he found many of the student presentations very interesting, and even learned new things from the invited speakers, some of whom he has heard many times before. Most students while caught up in the enthusiasm of their first major research project are necessarily much concerned with the details of their studies. In view of the polydisciplinary nature of the conference, students should be encouraged to spend a little more of their time explaining the larger setting and implications of their work to their colleagues who may be specializing in other fields. But the main thing that is needed to make the conference even more of a success than it was is a larger participation: from graduate students themselves (perhaps particularly including those who are not giving papers), and from senior undergraduate students (who should certainly not be excluded from future conferences). Professional geologists should also attend in larger numbers, and participate in the discussion, both formal and informal. The graduate students themselves expressed the hope that next year's conference, which will be held in Toronto at about the same time, and organized by Mr. Laurent de Verteuil (University of Toronto), will attract a larger group of professional geologists from industry and government. Perhaps some organizations may even come to see the conference as a good place to seek out promising new employees.

At any rate, central Canada has fewer regional geological organizations than any other part of Canada (or the adjacent United States). The Central Canada Geological Conference is off to a good start, and deserves our wholehearted (and open-pocketed) support in the future.



V.M. Goldschmidt Conference

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Victor Moritz Goldschmidt is generally regarded as the father of geochemistry. He was born January 27, 1888 in Zurich, Switzerland, and studied mineralogy, geology, and inorganic and physical chemistry at the University of Oslo. He received his doctoral degree from the University of Munich in 1911, and three years later he was appointed Professor and Director of the Mineralogical Institute at the University of Oslo. In the 1920s, Goldschmidt almost single-handedly laid the foundations of geochemistry through his studies of the distribution of the elements in minerals and rocks using optical emission and x-ray spectroscopy. He made significant contributions to the field of crystal chemistry by analyzing crystal structures with x-rays, and by determining the ionic radii of the elements. His studies laid the groundwork for concepts on the genesis of many types of ore deposits, as well as models of the geochemistry of the earth on a planetary scale through the study of the chemistry of meteorites. He also studied the geochemistry of the individual elements, summarized in his now classic *Journal of the Geological Society of London* (1937) paper on "The Principles of Distribution of Chemical Elements in Minerals and Rocks". V.M. Goldschmidt died in Norway in 1947 at the age of fifty-nine, yet still managed to guide the fledgling science posthumously through publication of his magnum opus, *Geochemistry*, in 1954.

Because of his extensive contributions to the field of geochemistry, it was only fitting that a major geochemical conference to mark the centennial year of V.M. Goldschmidt's birth was held in Baltimore, Maryland, 11-13 May 1988, immediately prior to the Spring Meeting of the American Geophysical Union. The V.M. Goldschmidt Conference was organized by the Geochemical Society, and was sponsored by the American Chemical Society, the Association of Exploration Geochemists, the European Association of