

## EDITORIAL

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*Regional Editors of Marine Geology*

### INTRODUCTION

The surface of the earth is approximately 30% land and 70% water. In the past, most of the geological literature has been devoted to the exposed 30%, and the assumption frequently was made that the sea floor is monotonously uniform and featureless. We know now that this is not the case. During the last generation, and especially during the years following World War II, studies of the edges of the sea, the sea floor, and of the structure beneath the sea floor have created one of the fastest growing fields of the geo-sciences. The results of these studies comprise an increasingly greater proportion of the literature, but now they are widely spread throughout geological, geophysical, and geochemical journals. Therefore, in an attempt to bring together a part of these recent contributions under a single cover, we take pleasure in introducing this new journal, which will be devoted exclusively to the fields of marine geology, marine geophysics, and marine geochemistry.

A common criticism today is that too many geological journals already exist and that the literature is too voluminous. There may be some justification in this claim, we all realize our inability to stay abreast of the new literature as it appears, except in our own narrow fields of specialization. The problem lies not in the number of journals, however, but in the vast number of papers and books being published each year. This, in turn, is a direct outgrowth of the increasing number of investigators involved in research activities in the earth sciences. We must inevitably face the realization that as research activities accelerate and the sum total of knowledge increases, we are being forced into more and more specialization, just as the naturalists of a century ago were forced into the narrow fields of geology, biology, physics, and chemistry.

At the time of organization of many of our existing journals, the geological profession numbered but a fraction of its present size, and the published output was proportionately smaller. Since that time, some new journals have been created and some of the older journals have been expanded, but others have held to approximately their original size. Unfortunately, the rate of expansion of the journals has not risen in proportion to the rate of advance in research, the net result being more and more delay

in publication. We cannot afford an increase in this publication time lag. As the situation now exists, by the time of publication many of our observations and data are superseded, and our interpretations require modification. We feel that rapid publication of new observations and well-seasoned interpretations can contribute greatly to scientific progress. We will endeavor, therefore, to process acceptable manuscripts promptly in order to hold publication time to a minimum.

#### OBJECTIVES

Since the scope of *Marine Geology* will include various phases of marine geology, marine geophysics, and marine geochemistry, an effort will be made to maintain a reasonable balance among these disciplines so as to avoid over-specialization. Although most studies of marine geology, geophysics, and geochemistry are necessarily based on description and interpretation of a single locality, many studies result in conclusions of general applicability and significance. An effort will be made to select these papers of general, rather than merely local, interest for publication. We certainly do not mean to discredit descriptive studies which do not contain general principles or world-wide applicability, but we suggest that their publication should be in periodicals of local or regional, rather than international, intent. Accordingly, in view of the hope that many or most of our readers will be concerned primarily with "marine geology" in the broader sense, geochemical and geophysical papers with applicability to "marine geology" will be given preference over those of only chemical or physical interest.

A new journal does not evolve into finished form overnight, a period of growth and development is required. Our intentions are stated here, but they may be accomplished only with the cooperation and assistance of members of the marine geological profession, i.e., the geologists, geophysicists, and geochemists who are interested in the marine environment. We will be particularly dependent upon those members of the profession who contribute scientific papers and upon those qualified to pass judgment on the papers. We urge the former group to supply us with sufficient manuscripts to enable us to accomplish our objectives through selectivity, and we urge the latter group to offer their suggestions and advice both on our objectives for the journal and on the execution of those objectives.

A very distinguished group of qualified advisers already have offered their aid in this venture by accepting appointment to the Editorial Board. We are honored to have many of the top names in the marine geological sciences associated with this Editorial Board. An attempt has been made to represent most of the contributing areas of the world, and a further attempt has been made to enlist the aid of specialists in many of the various facets of the field.

## SUGGESTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS

Prospective contributors are requested to submit their manuscripts to either of the Regional Editors, or, if desired, to any member of the Editorial Board. Submission in triplicate is strongly recommended, to expedite the review. There is no limit to the length of acceptable papers, but contributors are reminded that short papers of significance and interest are more widely read than long papers of the same significance and interest. Original research papers, review papers, and short communications are acceptable. Short articles and notes are conducive to easily assembled issues and generally faster editing, thereby speeding publication. Critical descriptions of new and improved methods, techniques and instruments are considered especially valuable contributions. No firm rules will be established on acceptability of different units (meters, feet, fathoms, nautical miles, kilometers). It is for each author to decide the most convenient units for his readers as well as for his own use. Authors are *encouraged*, however, to use two sets of units and two scales where convenient, i.e., both nautical miles and kilometers, both meters and fathoms or feet for depth, both meters and feet for elevation, and both degrees centigrade and Fahrenheit for temperatures.

Since *Marine Geology* is intended to be an international journal, our publisher has agreed to print papers in English, German, and French. When articles are submitted in German or French, we ask that contributors provide a good summary in both the language of the paper and in English. They are also invited to provide two sets of captions for illustrations and tables, one in the language of the paper and a self-explanatory one in English.

## STATUS OF MARINE GEOLOGY

It is customary for the editors of a new venture such as this to review the status of the field and to predict the trend for the coming years. Such an assessment serves to remind us of the original objectives of our endeavors, and to point out the facets of the field which we have neglected while racing forward along other lines. The resulting uneven advances of the frontiers are not to be condemned, it is evident that a single breakthrough in instrumentation or understanding may add spark and impetus to a single line of research, enabling it to far surpass other equally important and interesting allied lines of research. These gaps in the field eventually are filled, but frequently not until they are long forgotten and rediscovered.

It may seem presumptuous of us to attempt this assessment of the status of such a broad field as marine geology. Few individuals are capable of covering and understanding so great an area, and we do not count ourselves among them. Instead, we have asked some of the more distinguished specialists in the fields of marine sedimentology, marine geophysics, and marine geochemistry to summarize their opinions of the present state of our knowledge, the more important advances of the recent past, and the important lines of research likely to emerge in future years.