

Editorial

Proposed New Journal: *Tectonics*

There is a fundamental and urgent need for a high-quality international journal in tectonics. The literature is growing rapidly, and the best papers are spread through a wide range of journals such as *Journal of Geology*, Red JGR, *Tectonophysics*, *GSA Bulletin*, *EPSL*, *Geological Magazine*, *Geology*, *Geophysical Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society*, *Geological Society of London Journal*, and *American Journal of Science*. A top-flight international journal in tectonics with the highest refereeing standards would attract the very best papers and would rapidly gain acceptance as the prestige place to publish the best in analytical, synthetic, and integrative tectonics. It would be a journal to be read by almost everybody in regional geology, structure, tectonics, geophysics and hard-rock geology. Care would be needed to ensure that it did not harm the red JGR or GRL, which could be accomplished by defining the goals of the new journal so that everyone understood the kind of papers that would be considered. This could and should be done by excluding short notes and restricting papers for the new journal to the field of tectonics *sensu stricto*, i.e., the structure and evolution of the terrestrial lithosphere, with dominant emphasis on the continents. Papers on mantle convection, tidal friction, solid earth seismology, mantle and core petrology, and origin of the earth's magnetic field, for example, would thus be excluded. One could have the journal lean very heavily though not exclusively toward the structure and evolution of the continental lithosphere (dominantly the continental crust) and give the journal a strong slant toward integrative tectonics, structural geology, and materials science but discourage, for example, rock mechanics and earthquake prediction, which would go to the red JGR. I thus visualize a more continental, more geological, and less geophysical emphasis in a journal of tectonics. There would be some overlap with the red JGR but not a great deal. In no sense would this be a letters journal,

competing with GRL. We have a superb opportunity to found a scholastically excellent journal that is really needed in earth science. Tectonics is one of the central cores of earth science today, and yet we do not have a journal devoted exclusively to it.

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Comments Requested.

The Publications Committee solicits your comments and suggestions on the proposed new journal described above by Professor Dewey. According to present plans, AGU could publish this journal on a bimonthly schedule at a subscription price to AGU members of \$15–\$20 per year. In order to hold subscription prices down the journal would be limited to the equivalent of 400 JGR pages per year, but it would probably appear in a page size smaller than that of JGR. A high rate of rejection of manuscripts might be needed to limit the size of the journal while maintaining reasonably rapid publication. There would be no page charges, but only author-produced copy would be published. As is the case for author-produced papers in other AGU journals, papers would be copy edited before authors prepared camera-ready copy.

The Publications Committee feels that this proposed journal is scientifically worthwhile, is targeted on a rapidly growing field that lacks a publication focus, and will probably be a great success. More generally, we believe that geophysicists may welcome inexpensive, multidisciplinary journals oriented toward particular areas of research.

Please send your comments and suggestions to me at

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News

Winter Snow Drought

The winter of 1980–81 can be best described as a 'snow drought.' Donald R. Wiesnet and Michael Matson of NOAA's National Earth Satellite Service, who have been monitoring snow cover by using satellite measurements, report that the December–February snow cover in North America averaged only 13.9 million square kilometers, which is four standard deviations below the 10-year mean (15.5 million km²). January 1981 snow cover (14.1 million km²) was the all-time lowest January since the satellite records began (1966). February, with only 14.2 million km², was the lowest February of record. As a result, Wiesnet and Matson are estimating that the December–March total will also be the lowest of record.

Figures for Eurasia are also below average, but not as dramatically as those of North America. When added to-

gether, snow cover on both continental land masses is the lowest (40.6 million km²) it has been since 1970.

Many regions are dependent on snowmelt to sustain their water supplies throughout the year. Although the drought in the northeastern U.S. has abated in recent weeks because of rainfall, other areas dependent on snowmelt runoff will be forced to plan for a reduced seasonal supply.

This item was submitted by Don Wiesnet, who is a member of AGU's Snow and Ice Commission. ☺

Ocean Objectives for the '80's

Seven goals and objectives for services to ocean operations in the coming decade are outlined in a recent report