

Pyroclasts: Neale's Rating

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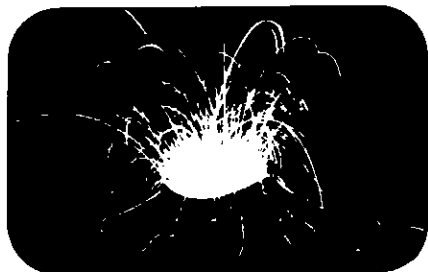
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Pyroclasts

Neale's Rating

I have spent a profitable few hours reading all the "Pyroclasts" articles written by Ward Neale. In a period of seven years he produced a total of twenty-two, an impressive average of three per year. One of Ward's most interesting contributions was on *The Establishment* (Geoscience Canada, v. 3, No. 1, p.54-55), those shadowy figures who held all the power in the geological world. Who were these figures? According to Ward, they were an elusive ever-changing group of people, eight of whom he named.

As I read more articles, it appeared to me that *The Establishment* had migrated to the pages of Pyroclasts. I decided to put my theory to the test by compiling a dossier of those fortunate enough to be named in "Pyroclasts". If we assume that being named in 22 issues represents 100% on my new scale, the Neale rating, the highest percentage is held by Dave Strangway at 36.36%. Then comes the triumvirate of Chris Barnes, Digby McLaren and Gerry Middleton at 31.8%. To complete the in-group of eight we have Norah Allman, Roger Blais, Duncan Derry and Bill Hutchison at 27.3%. One strong challenger who beats out many of we younger geologists is Sir William Logan, with a rating of 18.2%.

How is one elevated to the ranks of The Establishment? Through brilliant inductive reasoning, I have determined that such success reflects one of the following: attainment of high office in G.A.C. (not necessarily editor of *Geolog*); a commitment to C.G.C. and the ability to win gongs. Obviously the above eight persons deserve their high status in "Pyroclasts", but what of the little people, and I don't mean those who live in Middle-Earth. I am thinking of all those, workers and drones alike, who never see their names in print. I can't remedy this but periodically I shall do a head count of those listed in my articles: and if anyone, other than Herbie, is mentioned more than once, he or she will be stricken from the record. So beware all you members of The Establishment, your days are numbered. Thank goodness we can finally keep things under control with Neale's rating.

Open Houses

What is the latest craze sweeping the geological community? It's that most informative soul searching, known colloquially as "Open House". In a rapid check across the country I discovered that all provincial surveys, plus the G.S.C. and the Territories, now hold such events on an annual basis.

The format and frequency of the Open Houses vary from province to province. Several, including Saskatchewan, Alberta and New Brunswick, have one-day sessions: half a day devoted to talks, the other half to poster sessions. Ontario hosts a two-day event, sometimes with a panel discussion on the second day. The longest meetings are those of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, which run for two and a half days and include talks with concurrent poster sessions. Presumably this longer schedule reflects the longer travelling times needed.

Timing of the Open Houses is arranged with considerable care and with some consideration to the potential market. Several adjacent provinces coordinate the sessions, so that in 1982 New Brunswick's was on November 30th and Nova Scotia's on December 1st and 2nd. The Saskatchewan Open House on November 17th preceded Manitoba's by one day. With the exception of British Columbia and the G.S.C., all are held in late November or early December. The Provincial Geologists Committee is now collating the information on Open Houses, so that there can be continued co-operation regarding dates.

The response to these "Show-and-Tells" has been impressive, e.g., up to 750 people attended the Ontario two-day event. A breakdown of the participants shows that about 450 were from industry, 100 from the universities, 150 (not surprisingly) from the provincial Ministry of Natural Resources and nine from the G.S.C. Attendances at other "Open Houses" are somewhat less, but in 1979 Saskatchewan's attracted 425, and none of the Open Houses reported a turnout of less than 100 this year. That, I think, is a measure of their relevance and of industry's interest in new data.

Most provinces and the two territories now host an Open House every year. The exceptions are Alberta and British Columbia where present plans call for a biennial schedule. Since the purpose of most Open Houses is to keep the geological community informed of the current season's field work, it seems logical to aim for the yearly appraisal. This is also true when, as in Ontario, the gatherings also serve as a review of the Research Grant Program run by the Ministry. Each Research Grant recipient is expected make a fifteen minute presentation on his program, which explains the preferred title of the Annual Ontario Geo-

logical Survey Seminar.

The history of the provincial Open Houses appears to date back to November 1968 when Manitoba held its first one, I was informed by Dave McRitchie. Since then they have held one every year, making a grand total of fifteen if my arithmetic is correct. The second provincial survey to promote the Open House concept was Saskatchewan which started its own in 1969. That province, according to Les Beck, pioneered today's most popular format, a half-day of talks and half-day of poster sessions. From the beginning, both Manitoba and Saskatchewan issued Reports of Activities and preliminary maps for that season's field work in time for the Open House. Other provinces are following suit. As far as I can ascertain, New Brunswick has held seven Open Houses, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland six, and the Northwest Territories ten. By comparison, the G.S.C. and British Columbia with two and Alberta with one are novices.

The first G.S.C. Current Activities Forum was held in 1982. The second, and latest, in 1983 was attended by about 440 people of whom 175 were from the G.S.C.: it was by all accounts a very successful meeting. The format is not that of an Open House but rather a review of research projects in all the Divisions, from both Ottawa and the outports. The only criticisms I heard concerned the cameo appearances of some of the outlying divisions. Why don't these groups hold their own forums (or fora if you so prefer)? That's a good question which is already being addressed. The Institute of Sedimentary and Petroleum Geology held an Open House last November, at which there were literally no formal presentations. There have also been similar ventures at Bedford Institute and at Pat Bay. Perhaps in the future we shall see more formal presentations along the lines of the Current Activities Forum.

What conclusions can be drawn from a survey of "Open Houses"? First, the name stinks; any alternative would be desirable. Second, there must be formal presentations as well as poster sessions, a route followed by all the provincial surveys. Third, to hold one every year, although desirable, may be too demanding; such a schedule could become too burdensome, especially for organizations with limited resources. Fourth, I like the concept of reviewing research programs as is done in Ontario. And finally, it's one of the healthiest trends to appear on the scene in years. Let's give it all the support we can and encourage industry and the academic world to consider adopting a similar format. In the long term that would be beneficial to all of us.

Graham L. Williams