

Austin Geological Society: Early History and Recollections

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The Austin Geological Society began in April 1965 when a small group of geologists including Harold Holloway and James W. Sansom, Jr., of the Texas Water Development Board and Ernest T. Baker, Jr. and Al Winslow of the U.S. Geological Survey met to promote better professional communication among geologists in the Austin area. Bylaws were collected from several local geological societies around the state to assist in formulating one for an Austin Society. A meeting was arranged with faculty at the University of Texas Department of Geology to discuss the idea of starting an Austin Geological Society. Both Dr. Sam Ellison and Dr. Steve Clabaugh were interested. They encouraged us to proceed, and we asked Dr. Peter Flawn to be our first president. He agreed to do so and, six months later on October 7, 1965, the organization was officially founded with the adoption of a constitution and bylaws. The other officers for our first year in 1965-66 were Harold Holloway, Vice-President; James W. Sansom, Jr., Secretary; and Ernest T. Baker, Jr., Treasurer. All of the original four were officers over the next few years. Holloway was President in 1966-67, Baker in 1968-69, and Sansom in the 1972-73. A copy of the Austin American-Statesman article of June 19, 1966, that announced the incoming officers for the society for 1966-67 is included.

The society was initially operated on a shoestring budget. Meeting announcements were hand delivered to agencies where they were posted on bulletin boards. In 1968-69 a monthly newsletter was initiated by President Ernest T. Baker, Jr. The Society's proposed budget for 1975-76 included \$475 for printing and mailing our monthly newsletter. In this brief newsletter, we listed new technical projects of interest by our local geologists as well as new publications. The total money

estimated to be taken in by the Society for 1975-76 was projected to be \$2,165.00, and the total disbursement by June 1, 1976, was \$1,550.00. The dues at the time were \$8.10 for regular members and \$4.00 for student members.

The Society's membership rolls ranged from less than 100 to over 100 for the first 15 years and continued to grow through the years since its inception in 1965. For example, we had 84 members in 1966-67 and 180 members in 1978-79.

The Society had various meeting places at different times. Meetings as often as two a month were conducted at first with luncheons at noon and occasional evening meetings with papers presented by professionals in geology or related fields. The long-gone restaurant at the Villa Capri Motel, which was located on the west side of IH-35 north of Manor Road, was one of our first noon meeting sites where it cost \$3.16 for meal, tax, and tip. Other meeting places included the Ramada Inn at 300 East 11th Street (now the La Quinta Hotel), Scholz Garden on San Jacinto Boulevard, and Joe C. Thompson Center. Evening meetings were held at the Geology Department on the University of Texas campus. As time went on the Society determined that noon meetings with a meal and a speaker were the best attended. We had occasional field trips and spring parties in the late 1960s and early 1970s at Dr. Steve Clabaugh's lake house on Lake Travis and at the Zilker Clubhouse.

The past officers of the Austin Geological Society from its beginning in 1965 to 1980 were:

Year	President	Vice-President	Secretary	Treasurer
1965-66	Peter Flawn	Harold Holloway	James Sansom	Ernest Baker
1966-67	Harold Holloway	James Sansom	Ernest Baker	Roselle Girard
1967-68	Samuel Ellison	Hoye Eargle	Edwin Garner	Wallace Cooper
1968-69	Ernest Baker	Ross Maxwell	Earl McBride	Bruce Fink
1969-70	Gus Eiffler	Carroll Cook	Alan Shield	Cader Shelby
1970-71	Gunnar Brune	Virgil Barnes	Allen Winslow	Peter Stevens
1971-72	Rizer Everett	Allen Winslow	Tom Patty	Jan Knox
1972-73	James Sansom	Tom Patty	Ross Shipman	Ann Bell
1973-74	Bill Fisher	Murphy Hawkins	Rollin Hardin	Lori McVey Ann St.Clair
1974-75	Jean Williams	Rollin Hardin	Jimmy Russell	Peggy Harwood
1975-76	Robert Boyer	Charles (Chip) Groat	Fred Osborne	Sergio Garza
1976-77	Charles (Chip) Groat Sergio Garza	Sergio Garza E.G. Wermund	Robert Sheldon	Fred Osborne
1977-78	E.G. Wermund	Robert Sheldon	Peggy Harwood	Bernard Colley
1978-79	Robert Sheldon	Fred Osborne	Robert Loucks	Victor Baker
1979-80	Fred Osborne	Don Bebout Robert Loucks	Ann St.Clair	Robert Loucks

The Society pulled in members from a wide spectrum. Among the members were geologists, hydrologists, and geophysicists from state and federal agencies, education institutions, consultants, and other entities. Over a span of 15 years, we had representatives from the U.S. Geological Survey's Water Resources Division, the U.S. Geological Survey's Geologic Division, Texas Water Development Board, Texas Department of Water Resources, Bureau of Economic

Geology, University of Texas Department of Geological Sciences, Texas Highway Department, Austin Independent School District, various oil operators, independent geologists, oil companies, Texas Railroad Commission, Texas General Land Office, Governor's Office, U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, U.S. Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Texas Water Quality Board, University of Texas Department of Academic Affairs, Austin Public Library, Natural Science Center, University of Texas Department of Petroleum Engineering, Southwest Texas State University, Edwards Aquifer Research Center, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Department of Health, U.S. Bureau of Mines, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and yes, even the United Nations.

The Austin Geological Society is unique in respect to other local societies around the state. Most of the state's society memberships are predominately from the geologic discipline of petroleum geology. Our Society's membership is diversified as mentioned above. This mixture has given its membership a chance to listen, learn, and meet geologists from different disciplines within our local geological community.