

TWELFTH NORTHERN LIBRARIES COLLOQUY, 5-9 JUNE 1988. Edited by ANN M. BRENNAN and MARTHA ANDREWS. Boulder: World Data Center for Glaciology (Snow and Ice) and Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research (INSTAAR), 1988. Glaciological Data, Report GD-22. 331 p., figs. Softbound. No price indicated.

In keeping with the participants' commitment to share information and ideas, this report on the Twelfth Northern Libraries Colloquy provides a wealth of information on cold regions bibliographic resources. A wide range of topics is covered: from papers on individual library collections to discussions of proposed networks among information centres; from historical and archival subjects, such as the organization of polar information before the advent of on-line databases, to up-to-the-minute issues, such as the use of CD-ROMs for creating a polar bibliography; from descriptions of the operation of highly specialized science and technology libraries to discussion of issues in public library services.

This range is not surprising given that participants are interested not only in information in *all* areas of northern research but also in *all* collections located in sub-arctic and arctic regions, whatever their coverage. Where interests conjoin, however, is in the growing concern to create an international polar information network. The colloquy's theme, "Northern Information — The Global Connection," points to the information community's awareness that as science involves itself more and more with global issues such as environmental change, information sciences must be ready to support such research with global information accessibility. Of course, this is all very well to say, but somewhat more difficult to realize. Obstacles to such endeavors usually include everything from lack of funds to lack of compatibility of machine-readable catalogue records. This colloquy marks some progress toward making the network a reality, however. Participants approved a formal recommendation to establish a working group to prepare a design for a Polar Information Network. The recommendation includes a "vision" toward which the group will work:

To provide easy and effective access to all polar-related bibliographic data bases, expand data base coverage to subject or geographic areas not adequately covered, minimize the need for duplicate effort and develop dependable links to other international institutions that provide bibliographic data bases in order to expand access and ease of use.

Given the number of papers that discuss cooperative efforts in the report, fulfillment of this vision seems to be only a matter of time.

The primary audience for this report are information professionals. The papers deal with issues of interest and concern to those who spend their time searching out, organizing, and disseminating information. A secondary audience, naturally, are those who benefit from this work: people engaged in northern research. One issue discussed in several papers is of particular interest to both audiences, however, and that is the growing problem of "gray literature," a problem that plagues librarian and researcher alike. Gray literature is defined by one of the keynote speakers as "unreviewed preprints and reports with limited, usually author-controlled distribution." Typically, when an on-line literature search is done, the list of citations retrieved contains few if any references to the gray literature. This is because most databases tend not to pick it up, even those databases claiming to cover government and other types of reports. The researcher, thus, can miss relevant work very easily. The librarian, too, has problems. It is difficult to build up a comprehensive collection without these reports; yet it is often hard, first of all, to learn of their existence and, secondly, to find a supplier for them.

One of the papers deals with arctic/Alaska gray literature and presents the findings of a study on the coverage of it by various bibliographic databases, including GEOREF, COLD, NTIS, and BIOSIS. COLD has by far the best coverage. For the majority of the others, the failure rate is disquietingly high. Another paper, by

a keynote speaker, Dr. Juan Roederer, chair of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, discusses the problem of gray literature as a "major issue that must be addressed and resolved before a data and information policy for Arctic research can be formulated." He talks of "preventative medicine" to stop its proliferation and identifies main causes of the phenomenon that must be addressed. Unfortunately, these "main causes" are seemingly immutable aspects of the whole process of publishing and disseminating research results. For example, one major cause for the publication of results in report form is the delay between the completion of projects and the publication of the results in mainstream journals. Indeed, as Roederer points out, scientists are becoming "increasingly disenchanting" with the peer review process of many reputable journals, believing that it diminishes their chances of publishing "unusual results or bold, innovative ideas."

To the informed, or even to the casual observer, it seems likely that nothing short of revolution will be needed to sweep away such sacred cows as peer review or to speed up the process of publishing. But while the publishing industry is slow to change, information specialists, on the evidence of this report, are not. The text is full of innovative ideas for improving service to researchers, including ways to "capture" gray literature.

More than 80 people from 11 different countries attended the meeting in Boulder, Colorado. During their business meeting they approved a recommendation to change their name from "Northern Libraries Colloquy" to "Polar Libraries Colloquy," partly in order to encourage the Antarctic information community to join with them and thus extend lines of communication even further. The next meeting is in Finland in 1990. All indications suggest that it too will produce as valuable a document for research in cold regions as the 1988 colloquy has done.

Leah Watson
(NHRI Contribution No. 89003)
National Hydrology Research Centre
11 Innovation Boulevard
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada
S7N 3H5

ALASKA NORTH SLOPE GEOLOGY. Edited by IRV TAILLEUR and PAUL WEIMER. Bakersfield, Ca.: Pacific Section, Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists, and Anchorage, Ak: Alaska Geological Society, 1987. 874 p. Softbound. US\$48.00.

This two-volume publication is a collection of papers based on a seminar held in Anchorage, Alaska, in May 1985. The publication is intended as a source book for future resource explorationists, and as such endeavours to present the current state of geological knowledge of the Alaska North Slope. The two-and-a-half-year gestation period is a drawback in this regard, although understandable given the scope and size of the effort involved. The editors' focus on currency is emphasized by their inclusion of the abstracts from a 1987 Geological Society of America symposium on Brooks Range geology, reprinted as Appendix 4. Widespread support for such a volume is further illustrated by the cooperation of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, American Geophysical Union, the Geological Society of America, Society of Exploration Geophysicists and the Society of Economic Geology in allowing reprints of papers or abstracts originally published elsewhere.

The papers are organized into sections according to disciplines. The first 4 papers provide a background to the volume by recounting the history of petroleum exploration in the region. The second section, on reservoirs (6 papers, 6 abstracts), describes the characteristics of the principal reservoir units into which an estimated 60 billion barrels of oil and 30 trillion cubic feet of natural gas have accumulated in the various North Slope fields. The depositional environments of the sandstone and limestone units regarded as the main reservoirs, and their post-depositional histories relating to the