



**THE SOCIETY FOR ORGANIC PETROLOGY**



# NEWSLETTER

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## **The 37<sup>th</sup> Annual TSOP Meeting**

**Sofia, Bulgaria, 2021\***



*The Sofia University in Sofia, Bulgaria (photo from meeting website)*

**September 11-16, 2021**

**\*Meeting has been moved to virtual-only  
See page 2 for details**

Dear TSOP members

In connection with the 37th TSOP Annual Meeting in September in Sofia and the upcoming online council midyear meeting on March 19, I would like to inform you of the following.

After analyzing the current situation with the COVID 19 pandemic in our country, but also worldwide and taking into consideration the extremely dynamic and unpredictable environment, the organizing committee decided to transform the meeting from a hybrid to an online event.

As the decision was made in recent days, we did not have enough time to re-plan the event and to revise conference website. We need a few weeks to do that.

I apologize for the changes and I am very sorry that we will not be able to meet you in Sofia in September. Please watch for updates on the meeting website.

Kind regards,

Irena Kostova  
Chair of the Organizing Committee

Stay tuned for details on the website:

<http://www.tsop2021.org/>

**The Society for Organic Petrology**

TSOP is a society for scientists and engineers involved in coal petrology, kerogen petrology, organic geochemistry and related disciplines. The Society organizes an annual technical meeting and field trips; sponsors research projects; provides funding for graduate students, and publishes a website, Facebook Page, quarterly newsletter, annual meeting program and abstracts and special publications. Members are eligible for discounted subscriptions to Elsevier journals *International Journal of Coal Geology* and *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology*.

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#### **GUIDELINES:**

The TSOP Newsletter welcomes contributions from members and non-members alike. Readers are invited to submit items pertinent to TSOP members' fields of study. These might include meeting reports and reviews, book reviews, short technical contributions including those on geologic localities or laboratory methods, as well as creative works such as poems, cartoons and works of fiction. Photos, graphs and other illustrations are welcomed. Low-resolution images are discouraged, as they cannot be reproduced well in print. Articles are preferred in Microsoft Word, RTF or plain text formats.

#### **Contact the Editor:**

Rachel Walker [editor@tsop.org](mailto:editor@tsop.org)

#### **Membership Information:**

Please report any changes in address or contact information to Brett Valentine, TSOP Membership Chair:

[bvalentine@usgs.gov](mailto:bvalentine@usgs.gov)

Members can also update their own information by logging into the secure TSOP website:

[www.tsop.org/mbrsonly/](http://www.tsop.org/mbrsonly/)

The TSOP Newsletter is published quarterly by The Society for Organic Petrology and is distributed to all Society members as a benefit of membership.

Membership in the Society is open to all individuals involved in the fields of organic petrology and organic geochemistry. For more information on membership and Society activities, please see: [www.tsop.org](http://www.tsop.org)

For purposes of registration of the TSOP Newsletter, a permanent address is:

The Society for Organic Petrology  
c/o American Geological Institute  
4220 King St., Alexandria,  
VA 22302-1520 USA

#### **Newsletter Submission Deadlines**

June Issue: June 10th, 2021  
September Issue: Sept. 10th, 2021  
December Issue: Dec. 10th, 2021  
March Issue: March 10th, 2022

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## President's Letter

Dear TSOP Members,

Here it is one year after beginning the mandated work-from-home period during the global Covid pandemic. It is the new normal. I get up, exercise, and socialize with my group of running friends (socially distanced and outdoors, of course), then home to shower and back into my pajamas to sit in front of the computer. Initially, I worked on the sofa with a laptop but when it became apparent this work-from-home would continue for months at least, I went into the office and brought home a large monitor and an office chair. My wife Nadine shared a table with me, but she soon decided I type too loudly and moved her office upstairs into our bedroom. My 10-year-old daughter has her desk in our living-room, and I can see her from my spot if I lean to one side. We take breaks together, but she will soon go back to school in-person two days per week, and I will miss her being close as we transition back to the new, new normal.

The USGS Organic Petrology Laboratory is getting busier. Still only one person in the lab at a time but we are making data again and working out compromises to allow more people into the building at once. It means going in and out only through certain stairwells, doors and halls, but I'm happy to do that for the opportunity to play in the laboratory. It's Friday, March 6, and on Monday I will spend the day in the lab, playing with the microscopes. I hope that other TSOP members are also finding more freedom to get back to work safely.

In the United States, the number of new Covid cases is declining consistently each day although it still remains high. Locally, the number of new cases has declined past the high it reached last spring and some restrictions have been relaxed. Although facemasks are still mandated in Virginia, other States have decided to drop this protection. More and more, I hear news of people I know receiving vaccines and President Biden has stated that vaccines will be available for all adults by the end of May. I'm hopeful.

The TSOP Council will meet on March 19th to discuss meeting plans for Sofia. TSOP Councilor Irena Kostova and the organizing committee for the TSOP 2021 Annual Meeting in Sofia informed the Council that the meeting in September will be switched from hybrid virtual/in-person to virtual only, due to the unpredictable elements of COVID-19 and vaccination. Stay tuned to the TSOP webpages and Newsletter for more information and announcements about the TSOP 2021 Annual Meeting.

In the meantime, don't forget to tune in via Zoom for the Student Research Exchange presentations organized by TSOP Student Affairs Committee Chair Dane Synnott. I've caught a couple of these talks and it's great to see the enthusiasm and engagement of our younger members and our future TSOP leaders. Look for Dane's email announcing the next talk soon and check the TSOP Facebook page for Student Research Exchange announcements.

Be safe and well,



Paul Hackley, TSOP President 2019-2021



[www.facebook.com/OrganicPetrology](http://www.facebook.com/OrganicPetrology)



TSOP is an AAPG Affiliated Society.  
Abstracts from annual meetings are available through [AAPG Datapages](#).

## Join or Renew Your Membership



### TSOP Membership Dues

TSOP dues payments are due on or before **December 31<sup>st</sup> each year**. We encourage you to check your dues status and make your payment so that you can continue your TSOP membership and support the society and its work.

TSOP dues are currently set at:

**Individuals:**

- \$25 per year or
- \$100 for 5 years (5 years for the price of 4!)

**Students:**

- \$15 per year

**Institutional/Corporate:**

- \$75 per year

You can use our convenient online dues payment system to pay dues by credit card.

You can login at the [Members Only TSOP](#) website and select 'Online dues payment' or go to [www.tsop.org/dues](http://www.tsop.org/dues) and access the online form without logging in.

Thank you for your interest and support of TSOP and we look forward to a renewal of your TSOP membership.

## New Secure TSOP Website

Dear TSOP member,

Over recent months TSOP Council has engaged a software development contractor to redesign the TSOP members only secure site through which you currently conduct tasks related to your membership, such as pay dues, access the membership directory, or conference documents, etc.

On behalf of TSOP Council I am pleased to announce that the new secure site is now live. Please see below instructions on how to access the site:

Link to TSOP secure site: <https://members.tsop.org/> (or via *Members Only* link on TSOP site)

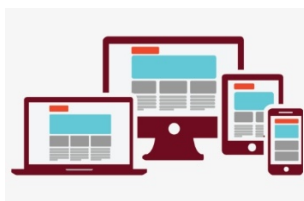
*Email/Username:* use the email address you used on the old TSOP secure site

*Password:* your old password on TSOP secure site (use the FORGOT PASSWORD if you need to reset your password)

We ask that you access the secure site in the coming weeks to ensure that you can log in to the site and that your membership information is correct. Please note, that if your membership status is not up to date you will not be able to access TSOP membership directory or download conference documents.

Any queries about the secure site operation and error messages (should they come up), can be sent directly to [webmaster@tsop.org](mailto:webmaster@tsop.org). TSOP council would welcome your feedback and suggestions and trust that it will be a pleasant experience using your new secure site.

Agnieszka Drobniak  
Chair of the TSOP Internet Committee



## Reference Volunteer Needed!

The TSOP Council is looking for an interested volunteer to manage updating the TSOP reference lists available at <https://www.tsop.org/references.html>. This is an important and useful tool for TSOP members and organic petrology researchers worldwide. If you are interested in helping TSOP out, please contact Paul Hackley at [phackley@usgs.gov](mailto:phackley@usgs.gov), Brian Cardott at [bcardott@ou.edu](mailto:bcardott@ou.edu) or Kaydy Pinetown at [Kaydy.Pinetown@csiro.au](mailto:Kaydy.Pinetown@csiro.au)



**Spackman Award**  
Graduate Student Research Grants  
Call for Nominations



**Deadline: May 31, 2021**

**PURPOSE**

The Spackman Award, formerly known as the TSOP Student Grants Program (originally patterned after the 1998 AAPG Grants In Aid Program), supports graduate thesis research in organic petrology. Research must demonstrate the utility and significance of organic petrology (which includes coal petrology, kerogen petrology, organic geochemistry and related disciplines) in solving the thesis problem.

**ELIGIBILITY**

The Spackman Award supports qualified graduate students from around the world who are actively seeking advanced degrees. Applicants who have previously been granted a Spackman Award are not eligible to apply for a second grant under the scheme.

**AWARDS**

Usually two monetary awards of U.S. \$1,000 and \$750 are granted. All applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful, are eligible to apply for one year of TSOP Student Membership at no cost.

**CONDITIONS**

Monetary awards are to be applied to expenses directly related to the student's thesis work, such as field expenses, laboratory analyses, etc. A portion (not to exceed 25%) of the award funds may be used to attend a TSOP Annual Meeting. Funds should not be used to purchase capital equipment, to pay salaries, tuition, room, or board during the school year.

Funds must be spent by the end of the calendar year following granting of the award, and an account of expenditure with copies of receipts should be provided by the end of that year (December 31, 2022 for awards granted in 2021).

**APPLICATION DEADLINE**

Completed applications must be e-mailed by May 31, 2021 to: Leslie (Jingle) Ruppert, Chair of TSOP Spackman Committee at [jingleruppert@gmail.com](mailto:jingleruppert@gmail.com)

Application form: [https://www.tsop.org/Spackman\\_award\\_apply.html](https://www.tsop.org/Spackman_award_apply.html)



**John Castaño Honorary Membership Award**  
Call for Nominations



**Deadline: May 31, 2021**

TSOP members are invited to nominate the scientist of your choice for the 2021 John Castaño Honorary Membership Award, The Society for Organic Petrology's highest honor ([www.tsop.org/honmem.htm](http://www.tsop.org/honmem.htm)). The award acknowledges distinction in a scientific discipline of significance to the society, in recognition of contributions in research, service to TSOP, or education. The John Castaño Honorary Membership conveys life membership in the society. It is named in honor of John Castaño, one of our most active Houston-based founding members. John served as inaugural Vice-President, and later, as President of TSOP. He was an organizer of three TSOP meetings in the Houston area, and was made an Honorary Member in 1995. John served TSOP in many capacities until his death in 1997; a memorial article was published in the June 1997 issue of the TSOP Newsletter.

If you would like to suggest a candidate for the 2021 John Castaño Honorary Membership Award, please submit a letter of recommendation and a brief vita of the nominee to:

Dr. Kaydy Pinetown  
CSIRO Energy  
36 Bradfield Road  
Lindfield West  
NSW 2070  
Australia

or email: [kaydy.pinetown@csiro.au](mailto:kaydy.pinetown@csiro.au) by May 31, 2021.

Please see more details at: [https://www.tsop.org/Castano\\_award\\_nominations.html](https://www.tsop.org/Castano_award_nominations.html)

It is suggested that supporting letters of recommendation from colleagues and other scientists accompany the package. Emphasis should be placed on the significance of the nominee's work.

Nominations will be reviewed by the John Castaño Award Committee and results will be announced at the Annual Meeting. The selection process is confidential, and nominees do not have to be former or current TSOP members.



The committee evaluates research, service and educational impact on the following criteria:

- Research contributions include work that demonstrates a high degree of originality and serves to advance the science of organic petrology or related disciplines. Nominees must possess a sustained international record of professional publication and achievement.
- Nominees recommended for service must demonstrate significance contributions to TSOP in a leadership role. Their service must have enabled the society to stimulate interest and promote innovative research in coal geology. Contributions include educational activities, administrative duties, or the development of the society.
- Nominees recommended for education must demonstrate a high degree of dedication and significant impact as a teacher of organic petrology or related disciplines.

Dr. Kaydy Pinetown  
TSOP Vice President and  
Chair of the Honorary Member Selection Committee



### Colin Ward Emerging Student Researcher Award



Deadline for TSOP 2021: **June 1, 2021**

#### *PURPOSE*

The Colin Ward Emerging Student Researcher Award is designed to support a PhD students' first attendance at the annual TSOP meeting. The award also is designed to integrate the PhD student into the TSOP community.

### ELIGIBILITY

The Award is open to PhD students in the field of organic petrology who never attended the TSOP meeting. The priority will be given to students who are early in their research and reside in countries with low TSOP membership. Making a presentation (oral or poster) at the TSOP meeting is optional.

*Note: if you are a Master's student or you have attended a TSOP meeting before please apply for the TSOP Student Travel Award instead.*

### AWARDS

The award is funded by Kathie Ward and named after Colin Ward (1945-2018) in recognition of his outstanding academic and research career, contributions to coal science, and service to TSOP. One (1) monetary award of \$700 (US) will be granted each year. The award also includes a 'meeting mentor' to help integrate the student into the TSOP community. The appointed meeting mentor is a long-time TSOP member who will serve as the social liaison for the awardee during the meeting experience.

**However, in 2021 as the TSOP Annual Meeting moves to online-only format, this award will support student's registration for the online meeting. The council is currently discussing how to utilize the funds to support student attendance. Please visit TSOP website for more information. TSOP encourages students to apply for the award.**

### SELECTION

Applications will be reviewed and ranked by a committee of three TSOP members. The priority will be given to students who are early in their research and reside in countries with low TSOP membership.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

After the meeting has concluded the student will also be required to submit a short article to the TSOP newsletter about their experience attending the TSOP meeting. Please note: If you received the Ward Award and are unable to participate in the conference the award money have to be returned to TSOP.

### APPLICATION DEADLINE

Completed applications must be e-mailed by **June 1, 2021** to David French: [davidfrench474@gmail.com](mailto:davidfrench474@gmail.com)  
Application form: [https://www.tsop.org/Ward\\_award\\_apply.html](https://www.tsop.org/Ward_award_apply.html)

Completed applications should include:

- Filled out Application Form (download below) that includes essay of how attending a TSOP meeting will benefit student's research.
- Letter of support from student's primary faculty advisor (attach as separate document).

## Student Travel Award

Deadline for TSOP 2021: **June 1, 2021**

### *PURPOSE*

The Student Travel Award is designed to support student attendance at the annual TSOP meetings.

### *ELIGIBILITY*

The Student Travel Award is open to students who have submitted an abstract for presentation (either oral or poster) at the Annual TSOP meeting. The abstract has to be accepted by meeting organizers to be eligible.

### *AWARDS*

Usually three (3) monetary awards of \$1,000 (US) each are granted. **However, in 2021 as the TSOP Annual Meeting moves to online-only format, this award will support student registration for the online meeting. The council is currently discussing how to utilize the funds to support student attendance. Please visit our TSOP website for more information. TSOP encourages students to apply for the award.**

### *CONDITIONS*

**For the 2021 online meeting**, monetary awards are to be applied only to expenses directly related to registration for the TSOP Annual Meeting. Funds should not be used to fund research, purchase capital equipment, to pay salaries, tuition, room, or board during the school year.

### *ACCOUNTABILITY*

Students receiving the award will be required to provide receipts detailing spending to TSOP after the meeting has concluded. Copies of registration receipts should be sent to the chair of the award committee. Please note: If you received the Student Travel Award and are unable to participate in the conference, the award money shall be returned to TSOP.

### *APPLICATION DEADLINE*

Completed applications must be e-mailed by **June 1, 2021** to Rachel Walker, Chair of the Student Travel Award Committee at [drachelwalker@gmail.com](mailto:drachelwalker@gmail.com)

Application form: [https://www.tsop.org/Travel\\_award\\_apply.html](https://www.tsop.org/Travel_award_apply.html)

Completed applications should include:

- Filled out Travel Award Application Form.
- Title, authors, and text of your abstract submitted to the TSOP Annual meeting.
- Cover letter requesting funds and stating how attending the TSOP meeting will help your research.
- Letter of support from your primary faculty advisor (attach as separate document).

### *SELECTION*

Applications will be reviewed and ranked by a committee of three TSOP members; selection of award winners will be based on a combination of quality of research/presentation and potential impact in the field of organic petrology.

## Gesner Medal

In February 2021, Dr. Erwin L. Zodrow was awarded the prestigious Gesner Medal by the Atlantic Geoscience Society, Nova Scotia, Canada. Recognized by the award are personal initiative and palaeobotanical contributions that spanned more than 40 years of research in the Sydney Coalfield, Nova Scotia, Canada.



**In Memoriam****Arthur D. Cohen****Palynologist and Organic Petrographer**

Jen O'Keefe, Fred Rich, and James C. Hower

Arthur David Cohen, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina and long-time The Society for Organic Petrography member, died peacefully in his sleep in May 2020. He leaves an extensive legacy of insights into sub-tropical swamp and salt-marsh plant communities, peat development, geochemistry, and coalification. Peat paleoecological studies using microtome section petrography and palynology were continuous themes through Art's more than 50 years of academic contributions.

Art was born in Wilmington, DE on 26 February 1942. He received his B.S. in geology, with a minor in mathematics, from the University of Delaware in June of 1964. It was during his B.S. that he was introduced to palynology by Dr. Edward A. Stanley, a recent graduate of the Coal Lab at The Pennsylvania State University, who supervised Art's BS thesis, "A Palynological Investigation of Post-Glacial Sea-Level Changes at Canary Creek Salt Marsh, Lewes, Delaware." Art began his graduate career following in Stanley's footsteps, joining William Spackman's Coal Lab at Penn State in 1964, along with University of Delaware classmate John C. "Jack" Crelling. Both would go on to illustrious careers in energy geosciences. While Alfred Traverse honed Art's palynological skills, Spackman introduced him to organic petrography and paleobotany, as well as the beauty and wonder of the Everglades and Okefenokee swamps, and the joy of teaching, both in the classroom and the field. These were passions that would never leave him.



The fall before completing his doctorate (December 1968), Art began his first academic posting, as an Assistant Professor of geology at University of Georgia, working with his old mentor, E.A. Stanley. This ended up being a one-year appointment, as he was recruited to establish the Coal Laboratory at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale beginning in Fall 1969, a position he held as Assistant Professor until his resignation in summer 1974, when he took a one-year appointment at the US Geological Survey's Coal Research Branch in Reston, VA.

In 1975 he took a position at the University of South Carolina, as Professor and Director of the Organic Sediments Research Center, a position he held until 1982. From 1982-1988 Art served as a staff scientist in the Wetlands Survey at Lost Alamos National Laboratory/University of California Berkeley while also maintaining appointments as an adjunct professor at both the University of South Carolina (USC) and the University of New Mexico. In 1988, he returned to the University of South Carolina as Professor of Geological Science & Marine Science, where he remained until his retirement in 2011. He relocated to Palm Harbor, Florida, following his retirement and opened Wetland Survey, LLC in Palm Harbor, Florida, which was active from 2014-2019. In 2015, Art was elected Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Geology at USC.

Over the course of his lengthy career, Art wrote or edited 12 books and published over 140 papers, as well as many abstracts and technical reports. Art was a leader in the study of peat petrography and pioneered the use of microtome thin-sections for this work, which sped up section production and increased tissue preservation. Throughout his early career, Art used both organic petrography and palynology to elucidate peat depositional systems, especially of the marine-influenced peats of the Everglades and Okefenokee.

In later years, the focus shifted to geochemical studies supporting peat utilization on one hand, and palynology-driven paleoecological and archaeological studies on the other.

Throughout, he was known as a gifted field trip leader, and was very well known for the excursions into the Everglades and Okefenokee he produced for AASP, GSA, industry, and many universities. Impeccably designed, supported by research, maps, hand-samples, and microscope slides, these trips sparked many others' scientific careers and produced a great deal of camaraderie among the invariably wet and muddy participants. Whether boating, coring, or examining samples collected in the evenings, Art's depth of knowledge and intuitive integration of organic matter production, both in terms of standing biomass and palynology, taphonomy, geochemistry, depositional environments, and diagenesis made these trips the scientific gold standard. It is also worthy of note that Art always dressed in respectable field gear; he could have gone shopping in his field attire. He never hesitated, though, to get "down and dirty" when it came to slogging through a swamp, up to his knees in water and peat. He clearly loved what he was doing.

A prolific researcher and presenter, Art was a fixture at scientific meetings, especially annual and regional meetings of the Geological Society of America, The Society for Organic Petrology, and AASP – the Palynological Society. Beyond his insightful presentations, Art was well known for quietly entering presentation halls, asking one or two insightful questions, then fading into the background. He was never one to call attention to himself but went out of his way to support students and help everyone around him grow as scientists.

Art supervised or co-supervised 10 PhD students and 22 Masters students on wide-ranging topics from peat petrography, palynology and paleoecology, geomorphology and tectonics of wetlands, elemental and mineral distributions in peats, and utilization of peats as sorbents. Many of his students went on to become well known scientists and public servants, including leaders in organic petrography (Jim Staub - MS, 1977), palynology and organic petrography (Fred Rich - PhD, 1979), and National Park Scientists (David Skelley - PhD, 2007). For excellence in undergraduate education in the classroom and field, Art received the Michael J. Mungo Undergraduate Teaching Award from the University of South Carolina in 2003.

A consummate public servant, especially early in his career, Art served as chairman of the Coal Division (now Energy Geology Division) of the Geological Society of America in 1976 and won the outstanding paper award in 1987. He became a fellow of the Geological Society of America in 1982. Beginning with his service in 1976, Art completed many volunteer tasks with the Coal Division, including internal committee service, membership on the joint technical program committee for annual meetings, and as a session chairman. For 20 years of sustained service, he received the Distinguished Service Award from the Coal Division in 1996. Art served on the ASTM Classification of Peat Committee, which he chaired in 1979, as well as contributing to the development of other ASTM standards relating to coal and peat, for which he won Standards Development Awards in 1992, 1996, and 1997. Art served as president of The Society of Organic Petrology in 1989-1990. He received the Gilbert Cady Award from the Coal Geology Division (now Energy Geology Division) of the Geological Society of America in 2005 for his immense contributions to peat and coal petrography, palynology, and geochemistry, as well as energy education.

Art left us in much the same way he lived among us: quietly, with no fanfare, but he will not be forgotten: his scientific legacy will stand the test of time.





## Summary of Responses to TSOP's Liaison Committee Questionnaire

As you know, the TSOP Liaison Committee has recently been reactivated. In September's TSOP Newsletter, I outlined the goals and objectives of this Committee, [and that article can be found here](#). That article was followed up by a questionnaire, sent by e-mail to all TSOP members, designed to inquire about other professional societies with which our members are involved, and to assess your interest in participation in the Liaison Committee. In this article I will summarize the 24 responses I received from that e-mail and make a few comments about the questionnaire responses and objectives of the Liaison Committee.

Before we start, I will note that as of mid-year 2020 TSOP had about 220 active members. Thus, the response rate for the questionnaire was about 11% of total active membership. My sincere thanks to those of you who responded – your comments will help to guide Committee activities over the next several years and provide TSOP leadership with helpful membership statistics.

The questionnaire included 5 questions – summarized responses to each of these are listed below.

**Q1)** *How many years have you been a TSOP member?*

**A1)** Average response: slightly under 26 years. I have two comments about this average. First, the average respondent age is an important number to keep in mind as you read the responses below, because it suggests a low response rate among members who joined TSOP in recent years. And second, this average age can be used to infer a continued decline in membership over the next 5-10 years if younger members are not joining. Indeed, several respondents to this questionnaire mentioned their declining involvement because of recent or coming retirement plans.

**Q2)** *What do you consider your primary scientific specialty?*

**A2)** Members responded with a list of their own specialties, in many cases more than one per person. Here is the full list, alphabetically: Carboniferous seed-ferns; coal geochemistry; coal geology; coal petrology; inorganic geochemistry; medical geology; organic geochemistry; organic matter associated with ore deposits; organic matter preservation and fungal decomposition through time; organic petrology; paleoclimatology; Paleozoic palynology; petroleum geochemistry; petroleum systems; stable isotopes; unconventional gas emissions assessment; unconventional resources.

**Q3)** *In what other scientific professional societies do you hold membership, and what is your activity level in those societies – light/medium/heavy?*

**A3)** Our TSOP members are also members of many other professional societies, and active in them to varying degrees. The list of these societies follows. When more than one respondent mentioned a society, the total number is given in parentheses. Rather than record the activity level as provided by each respondent, I provided that number in parentheses because I think it's a good indication – across all of TSOP -- of member activity level in other societies. (The underlining of certain society names is explained in the response to the next question.)

American Association of Petroleum Geologists (11)  
American Association of Stratigraphic Palynologists (2)  
American Chemical Society (3)  
American Geophysical Union (4)  
American Society for Testing and Materials  
Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy  
China Coal Society; China Geology Society  
European Association of Organic Geochemists (4)  
Fort Worth Geological Society  
Geochemical Society (3)  
Geological Society of America (9)  
Geological Society of Australia  
Geological Society of New Zealand  
Geological Society of Washington  
Houston Geological Society  
International Association for Geoscience Diversity  
International Committee for Coal and Organic Petrology (ICCP; 5)  
International Medical Geology Association  
Indonesian Petroleum Association)  
International Union of Geological Scientists  
Oklahoma City Geological Society  
PAGES Varve Working Group  
Petroleum Exploration Society of Australia (2)  
Society of Economic Geologists  
Society for Environmental Geochemistry and Health  
Society for Geology Applied to Ore Deposits  
Society of Petroleum Engineers (3)  
Society for Sedimentary Geology (SEPM)  
Society of Well Log Analysts  
United Kingdom Mineral Society

As indicated in this list, our members hold memberships more extensively in some societies than in others. Below I have listed those professional societies in which more than one respondent holds membership, in descending order.

- American Association of Petroleum Geologists (11)
- Geological Society of America (9)
- International Committee for Coal and Organic Petrology (ICCP; 5)
- American Geophysical Union (4)
- European Association of Organic Geochemists (4)
- American Chemical Society (3)
- Society of Petroleum Engineers (3)
- Geochemical Society (3)
- American Association of Stratigraphic Palynologists (2)
- Petroleum Exploration Society of Australia (2)

On the basis of these responses, the societies of greatest interest to our membership appear to be AAPG, GSA, ICCP, AGU and EAOG.

**Q4)** *With what other scientific professional societies should TSOP have a working relationship?*

**A4)** Most of the societies mentioned in response to this question are underlined in the list of responses in Question 3. In addition to these – i.e., in addition to the societies to which our members belong -- respondents also mentioned the following: Academy of Forensic Sciences; American Chemometrics Society; Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists; Botanical Society of America; Nanoplastics; Society of Chemical Industry; Soil Science Society of America. The “strength” of the response to this question roughly parallels the number in parentheses given in the response to the previous question. In other words, TSOP members feel most strongly that we should have a working relationship with those societies in which our members are most likely to already be involved with.

**Q5)** *Are you interested in participating in TSOP’s Liaison Committee, and if so, with what other societies would you be interested in expanding our Liaison activities?*

**A5)** This question received a reasonably good response, with four ‘yes’ or ‘maybe’ responses. I’ll be following up on these soon, as the activities of the Liaison Committee crystallize in 2021.

In addition to direct responses to these questions, several members provided helpful questions and suggestions for the Committee, and comments about TSOP as a whole. I have listed some of these, anonymized, below:

- “With coal in decline, oil and gas having hard time, and uncertain political situation, TSOP needs to evolve in order to grow or even to survive.”
- “Anthropogenic microplastics and nanoplastics in water, soil and sediment (even in organisms) are considered major problems. TSOP is uniquely positioned to help in the characterization and quantitation.”
- “Why did we back away from AGI [American Geosciences Institute]? They still list TSOP as a member society.”
- “Science funding for coal research, and subsequently for fossil fuel research in general, will decline and make the field less attractive for young people over the next 20 to 30 years. At the same time, environmental problems involving solid organic substrates in soil, water, and sediment will gain importance. This is where TSOP could latch on.”

A key objective of this questionnaire was to determine which societies TSOP should liaise with, and who might be interested in helping with that effort. Members provided a clear response to the first item: AAPG, GSA, ICCP, AGU and EAOG were mentioned most often. Are you interested in helping us strengthen our connections with these five societies? There are many ways to do this, including maintaining regular communications with society leadership and attending society conferences and conventions as a TSOP representative. If you have an interest, please contact me. Over the coming months we will be putting together a “how-to” document on TSOP liaison with other professional societies, and your early involvement would provide you the opportunity to contribute to that document. I hope to hear from you!

Joe Curiale

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2021

Please send in meeting, short course and special event announcements to the Editor  
<http://www.tsop.org/events.html>

**May 23-26, 2021**

AAPG 2021 Annual Convention & Exhibition  
Denver, Colorado, USA

[Visit the ACE 2021 website](http://www.aapg.org/2021-convention)

**June 21-15, 2021**

14<sup>th</sup> ICCP Course: General Coal Geology & Organic Petrology  
Potsdam, Germany

[Visit the ICCP website](http://www.iccp.org)

**August 16-21, 2021**

36<sup>th</sup> International Geological Congress  
Delhi, India

[Visit the IGC website](http://www.igc2020.org)

**September 11-16, 2021**

37<sup>th</sup> TSOP Annual Meeting – virtual meeting

<http://www.tsop2021.org/>





From the depths of TSOP meeting history, a memento from a joint TSOP/ICCP meeting held Penn State University in 1992. Photo and memento courtesy of Tim Moore.