



# Association of Applied Geochemists

[www.appliedgeochemists.org](http://www.appliedgeochemists.org)

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT, STEPHEN COOK



By the time you are reading this, my penultimate message as President of the Association of Applied Geochemists (AAG), you will have received my letter soliciting nominations for election to AAG Council for the upcoming 2020–2021 term. The approaching council term is a particularly significant one given that it will coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the association in 1970 as the Association of Exploration Geochemists (AEG). The AEG became the AAG in 2003. The council term also coincides, more generally, with a figurative “passing of the torch” from that founding generation of exploration geochemists and their successors to a new generation of applied geochemists who will steer our discipline into the next half-century.

This brings me to the main point of my message, which is to highlight the importance of service to our geochemical community in achieving the above. The AAG is a volunteer organization, relying on geochemists to volunteer their time and energy to staff the Executive, the Council, and the slate of Regional Councilors around the world. The planning and running of symposia, the funding and teaching of educational workshops, and the peer review of scientific papers are just a few of the many collaborative activities of the global geochemical community which would not be possible in the absence of our dedicated volunteers (past, present and future). Of course, many personal benefits also accrue from such service, such as the opportunity to meet and work with many talented colleagues around the world which helps us to grow and develop as scientists.

So, what is required to serve on the AAG Council? Simply, you must be a Fellow in good standing with the AAG. If you are an AAG member with at least six years of post-bachelor's degree experience, I urge you to submit your application for Fellowship at the first opportunity. Full details of the requirements are available at the AAG website. Becoming a Fellow is a relatively simple procedure and will put you in a position

to help influence the activities of the AAG over the coming years and decades. A broad slate of candidates for election to the AAG Council each year ensures that the membership has the opportunity to select a capable and diverse group of men and women to guide AAG's activities. It is also a sign of a healthy organization, where individuals are prepared to work together for the common good of geochemistry, wherever we may call our home in the world.

To sum up, I urge all Fellows to consider putting their names forward for election to AAG Council for the upcoming 2020–2021 term. Councilors serve a term of two years and may then stand for election to a second two-year term. Half of the council seats come up for re-election every year, providing continuity on the council from one year to the next. Serving on council also provides the experience necessary to potentially serve on the AAG Executive, either as president or in one of the other executive positions, where one can play a guiding role in the association. Many notable geochemists from industry, government, and academia have served terms as president and vice-president of the association over the past half-century. Many of these have been giants of our discipline who have made significant contributions to applied geochemistry in all its forms. William B. Coker (1946–2014; spent much of his career with the Canadian Geological Survey) and Stanley J. Hoffman (d. 1994; Chief Geochemist with BP Minerals for much of his career) are examples of two distinguished former AAG Presidents who played significant roles in my own education as a geochemist over the years.

As a final note, it is with considerable sadness that I must pass along news of the tragic death on 21 June 2019 of Prof. Peter Winterburn in Valparaiso (Chile). Peter was an accomplished scientist in mineral exploration and academia and a good friend to many. He had recently returned to Santiago (Chile) to rejoin Vale, a global mining company, after several years as Professor of Exploration Geochemistry at the Mineral Deposit Research Unit (MDRU) at the University of British Columbia (Canada). The AAG extends its most sincere condolences to Peter's family. We will provide further details on his life and accomplishments in the next issue of *EXPLORE*.

## OBITUARY FOR DR. VICTOR M. LEVSON (1956–2019)

Victor M. Levson passed away 31 March 2019 at the age of 62. Vic was a Quaternary geologist and spent most of his professional career at the British Columbia Geological Survey in Victoria (Canada). He was an early adopter of drift prospecting for mineral exploration in the Canadian Cordillera and presented at the Drift Prospecting Workshop held at the AAG's 1999 International Geochemical Exploration Symposium in Vancouver (Canada). He made significant contributions to the discipline and provided important insights into the Quaternary history of British Columbia and the effect of complex ice-flow histories (including ice-flow reversals) on the clastic dispersal of mineralized bedrock in subglacial tills. Vic also wrote important papers on the stratigraphy and geologic settings of gold placers in the Cariboo and Atlin regions of British Columbia.

Vic's MSc and PhD research focused on the Quaternary sedimentology, stratigraphy, and history of the Jasper area under the supervision of Dr. Nat Rutter at the University of Alberta (Canada). Vic joined the British Columbia Geological Survey in 1989 and completed his PhD in 1995. Upon leaving government in 2009, he formed his own consultancy, Quaternary Geosciences Inc. Throughout his career, Vic was keenly interested in applied aspects of Quaternary geology, across a diverse range of research topics. He is best known for his contributions to Canadian Quaternary stratigraphy, sedimentology, and ice-flow histories, producing seismic hazard maps for parts of southwest British Columbia, and drift prospecting method development for the Canadian Cordillera. Vic



authored or co-authored more than 150 scientific papers, reports and maps, and wrote countless conference abstracts and presentations. Known for his astute observations and attention to detail, his till geochemical datasets continue to guide mineral exploration in central British Columbia.

Vic was also an adjunct professor in the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, University of Victoria, where he supervised 10 graduate students. He served as an external examiner for many theses at the University of Victoria and other Canadian schools. For 18 years, Vic taught a fourth-year applied Quaternary geology course at the University of Victoria. A highlight of the undergraduate program, this course inspired many students to pursue careers in Quaternary geology. His annual four-day field trip through Washington State (USA), with stops at the Channeled Scablands and Mount Baker, became legendary. Vic also lectured

in the Department of Geography (University of Victoria) and the Department of Chemistry and Geoscience (Camosun College, Canada).

Perhaps Vic's greatest contribution was how he treated people. Not only was Vic a respected geoscientist and gifted teacher, he was a selfless mentor and friend. Vic taught all of us who were fortunate to have worked with him how “to do the right thing” – a legacy that will endure. He led by example and passed on a set of core values that have continued to guide us well.

Cherished by his family, Vic squeezed the most out of every day. We will miss his infectious laugh, ingenious practical jokes, and unwavering friendship.

**Travis Ferbey** (British Columbia Geological Survey)