



The Clay Minerals Society

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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Bruno Lanson

Following the current recommendations to prevent the spread of the COVID-19, I now write my first President's Corner from home. As many of you, I have been essentially working remotely for a couple months now and will likely be doing so for a while yet. I had hoped to attend the Clay Minerals Society (CMS) Annual Meeting in Richland (Washington, USA) in June 2020, but this conference, as done with many others, has been postponed and switched to a virtual format.

Attending meetings in person has clearly become a problem for many, due both to travel restrictions and to sanitary considerations. This has caused me to have somewhat contradictory feelings. On the one hand, current travel restrictions are good for the planet, because they help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and possibly mitigate climate change. And, from a personal perspective, I would add that I have really enjoyed the more intense silence that resulted from the lockdown although (because?) I am living in a quiet and remote area. On the other hand, we are losing important opportunities to enrich ourselves by meeting people from different countries with different backgrounds and different cultures. For "older" folks with long-established networks, we miss meeting up with friends and colleagues, discussing on-going projects, or imagining new ones. True, most of this can be (is being) done remotely through electronic exchanges (via e-mails, video calls, etc), and that lockdown has given us ample opportunity to develop our remote communication skills and tools. But meeting people face-to-face is special.

Thinking back, I now fully appreciate the chance that these gatherings offered me in terms of meeting people who inspired me, listening to their presentations, discussing with them in person, or, later on, enjoying their company and friendship. Conferences are obviously ideal occasions for such meetings; but visits to laboratories and attending seminars offer many additional occasions for fruitful exchanges and opportunities to meet scientists who may become advisors, colleagues, and eventually friends. In this regard, I would like to mention two people who shaped the scientist I eventually became: Victor Drits, who I first met at the lab where I was preparing my PhD, and Bob Reynolds, who I met at a CMS meeting. I am fully aware of how fortunate I was both as a scientist and as a person to have had these and many other encounters.

The current situation strongly and negatively impacts this networking activity and these exchanges, which, in my opinion, are an essential component and a clear benefit of CMS activity. One key role of scientific societies has always been to favor exchanges and interactions between scientists, and I strongly believe that the present situation should only be an additional incentive to strengthen this role, obviously in more diverse ways. This role is especially important for our younger colleagues, students, post-docs, and nontenured scientists, and we collectively have to be careful in answering their solicitations and demands. The present period is especially stressful for them because it coincides with a period when they are seeking opportunities and contacts that might shape their future. It is our collective role to help them as much as we possibly can.

As I wrote earlier, the annual meeting of the CMS has been postponed to October 2020 (<http://www.clays.org/57thAnnualMeeting.pdf>). The organizing committee decided to hold the meeting remotely, with virtual talks. I hope to see many of you there.

Bruno Lanson (bruno.lanson@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr)
President, The Clay Minerals Society

CMS COUNCIL MEETING UPDATES

On 16 June 2020, the CMS Council met. Usually this meeting is scheduled during the CMS Annual Meeting, but this year it was held virtually. During the meeting, the annual change in CMS leadership took place. Dr. Bruno Lanson (ISTerre, Grenoble Alpes University, France) took over from Andrey Kalinichev as President of the CMS. Jeffery A. Greathouse (Sandia National Laboratories, New Mexico, USA) is the new Vice President, and Stephen Hillier (The James Hutton Institute, Scotland) is Vice President Elect. Four new Council Members were elected to serve through 2023: Christopher Greenwell (Durham University, UK), Toshihiro Kogure (University of Tokyo, Japan), Tanya Peretyazhko (Jacobs, Texas, USA), and Patrick Sellin (Svensk Kärnbränslehantering AB, Sweden).



Jeffery Greathouse



Stephen Hillier

Several professional awards were conferred. Prof. Eduardo Ruiz-Hitzky [Materials Science Institute of Madrid, National Research Council of Spain (ICMM-CSIC)] received the 2020 Marilyn and Sturges W. Bailey Distinguished Member Award, and Prof. Eric Roden (University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA) received the Marion L. and Chrystie M. Jackson Mid-Career Clay Scientist Award. Award recipients will give award talks at the 2020 CMS meeting in October.

In addition to profession awards, student research and travel grants were also awarded. Winners of a 2020 CMS Research Grant were Adrian Broz (University of Oregon, USA); Erin Gibbons (McGill University, Canada); John W. Robertson (Sul Ross State University, USA); Jonathan Smolen (University of Connecticut, USA); and Christina Woltz (University of California at Santa Barbara, USA). John W. Robertson, as author of the highest scoring research grant, also received the Reynolds Award. Student research grants offer up to \$3,000 to support a students' research on topics related to clays. The application deadline for next year will be in February 2021. Research done by students supported by CMS grants will be featured in forthcoming issues of the *Elements*.

Winners of a 2020 CMS Travel Grant were Harry Brooksbank (Newcastle University, UK), who also received the Blair Jones/Jane Flynn Award as the highest-ranking Travel Grant awardee; Ethan Coffin (Miami University, Ohio, USA); Amal Kanti Deb (University of Newcastle, UK); Silvina A. Di Pietro (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Washington, USA); Nadine Kanik (Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland); Malgorzata Lempart (Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland); Xinxin Mo (Nanjing University, China); Aditi Pandey (Texas A&M University, USA); Xinyi Shen (Princeton University, New Jersey, USA); Jordan Stanberry (University of Central Florida, USA); Maggie White (Newcastle University, UK); Pawel P. Ziemianski (Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland); and Sean Ziga (Georgia State University, USA). A Student Travel Grant helps cover the cost of attending the CMS Annual Meeting.