

## The Show Must Go On: Our Tribute to Rod

Rod Ewing stepped down officially as principal editor of *Elements* at the end of 2005. However, as Rod is the editor in charge of this issue, we decided to print our tribute to him here. When it was decided that the initial group of principal editors would have staggered terms, he insisted that he should have the shortest term. "I will have been involved with this project for five years by the time I step down," he said. Rod will still be involved with *Elements* in an advisory capacity to the Executive Committee. He will also be the guest editor for issue 6 of volume 2 (next December). And we know we will be able to consult him as need arises.

Rod's vision for the mineral and geochemical sciences grew out of his involvement with the Materials Research Society. Over the years, he witnessed how their flagship publication, *MRS Bulletin*, had been instrumental in raising the profile of the materials sciences. He watched the materials societies grow and prosper, and the idea of a counterpart publication for the mineral sciences germinated. When he became vice president of MSA in the fall of 2000, he undertook to bring this idea to fruition. Sorena Sorensen relates that, at the 2000 MSA fall council meeting when he introduced the idea of a magazine published by several societies, he was met with stunned silence. Could such a thing possibly be done? He left with a "OK Rod, give it a try." Being of an optimistic nature, he felt that Council had been very supportive. Over the next few months, he took his "pilgrim's stick" and systematically approached mineralogical and geochemical societies. A phone call to outline his ideas was followed by a written proposal and copies of *MRS Bulletin*.

Everyone had the same initial reactions:

"We cannot increase dues, and finances are too tight for a new project."

"Not all our members will be interested in receiving it."

"Won't we just be talking to ourselves?"

"Most of our members are members of other societies and will receive it anyway."

And if the truth be told, I was perhaps the person with the most questions and concerns! Rod respectfully and patiently answered all these questions.

Rod felt strongly about a few things: the thematic nature of the magazine, the international nature of the endeavor, and the need to make this magazine a member benefit of the participating societies. He welcomed and actively solicited input on every other aspect of the project. In early 2003, when he felt the idea had had enough time to germinate, he formed a steering committee composed of representatives of all societies that had expressed some level of interest. The group discussed the governance structure and the objectives. There was debate about defining our readership. A subcommittee, composed of Alex Speer, Kevin Murphy, and myself, formulated the first business plan. It was decided that with a substantial volunteer start-up effort, we could get going.

In the fall of 2003, the committee became very quiet: even the mock-ups of what the magazine might look like raised no discussion. I remember one phone call from a frustrated Rod. "We have a nucleation problem. If we can get two or three societies to give us a green light, I think others will



Rod looking for betafite crystals in Madagascar

come on board." This is exactly what happened. At its fall council meeting, MSA gave a green light, with the proviso that at least one other society join. MinSoc and MAC followed in short order. By the time we went to press with the first issue in November 2004, four more societies had joined. It has been heartwarming to see how readily the scientific community has accepted *Elements*.

Mike, Ian, now Bruce, and I have been involved with Rod on a quasi daily basis getting this project off the ground and running. It has been a joy working with him. In spite of a grueling schedule, he always made himself available for *Elements*. On behalf of the whole mineralogical-geochemical community and all the participating societies, we want to thank Rod. His enormous contribution is clear: without him, *Elements* would not have happened. To paraphrase Neil Armstrong's famous phrase, a small step for the societies, a giant leap for the mineral and geochemical sciences. Perhaps this is how we will view Rod's contribution years from now.

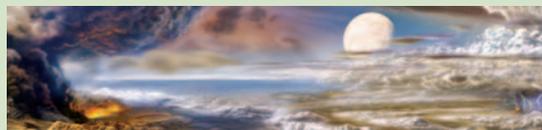
And for us, the best way to thank him is to continue the work he started, because "the show must go on."

**Pierrette Tremblay**, on behalf of  
Mike Hochella, Ian Parsons, and Bruce Watson

### IN THE NEXT ISSUE, READ ABOUT

#### Early Earth

Guest editor: John W. Valley  
(University of Wisconsin-Madison)



The earliest Earth was a strange inhospitable world, yet transitions occurred culminating in the evolution of life within the first billion years. The preservation of a sparse and ambiguous rock record has encouraged debate. Recent studies have greatly refined the nature and timing of key events. This issue will review current knowledge of the age of the Earth, massive meteorite impacts, the atmosphere and hydrosphere, the rock record, and the emergence of life.

**The Origin of the Earth: An Update**  
Alex Halliday (Oxford University)

**Impact Processes on the Early Earth**  
Christian Koeberl (University of Vienna)

**Earth's Earliest Atmosphere**  
Kevin Zahnle (NASA-Ames)

**Antiquity of the Oceans and Continents**  
Alan Nutman (Australian National University)

**The First Billion Years: When Did Life Emerge?**  
Bill Schopf (UCLA)