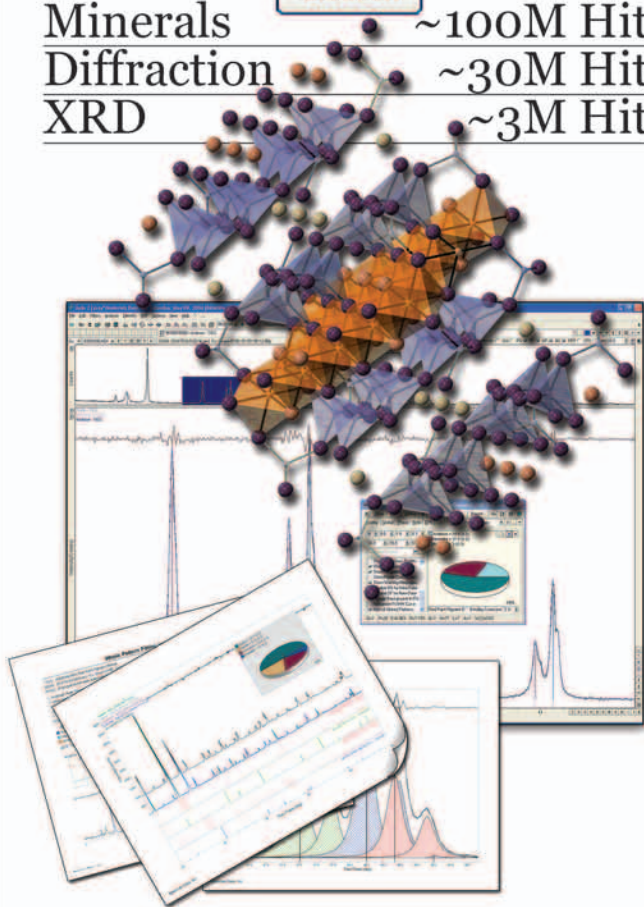


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ABOUT VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

I am writing to see how one may obtain a few extra copies of the February issue of *Elements*. I am a subscriber (through my membership in the Mineralogical Society of America) and thoroughly enjoy this publication. As for my interest in February's issue—this is an excellent issue for a number of reasons. First, a wonderful overview of the capabilities of national facilities is given and as such serves as an excellent reference. Primarily, however (and here is my motive!), this issue is fantastic ammunition for promoting research at such facilities to people such as my Dean, VP for research, etc. I would be grateful if I could wave a copy or two under the noses of these individuals, especially since many of my colleagues are featured in this issue, as well as facilities at which I am a regular user. Is there a way to purchase five extra copies?

Chris Cahill,

George Washington University

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I read every new issue of *Elements* as soon as it reaches my desk. The Journal is so informative and well produced. The congratulations and awards that it receives are well deserved. In volume 2, issue 1, Michael Hochella mentioned a few questions in his editorial that prompt me to take up two issues. The first is about the intelligent design hypothesis. I am convinced of the fact of evolution, but I see a great logical gap in the traditional explanation for the development of morphologies or processes that need many generations to become advantageous to the species: many mutations are needed, but, oddly, selection seems to operate only at the end of the development ... I would not be surprised if some biologists find these gaps too large and indicative of some fundamental flaw, leading them to explore different avenues. In my view, the intelligent design concept contains an exploitable core for science. Design is ever-present in nature. Every law of nature is a design, in that it brings about certain phenomena in a consistent and permanent way. Design, in this sense, is opposed to chaos and lack of pattern. Is evolution produced by a design or law of this type? Is there a biological law operating at molecular or genetic level that encourages organic changes in certain directions? I would like to see this avenue explored.

The second issue is global warming. Since the first cries of alarm were heard, I have come across of a number of articles based on geological and ice records that point in the opposite direction. In other words, the present temperature increase may be just a small cycle within a more general trend. Even if we are in a long-cycle global warming period, is it produced by human activity? Again, there are data that seem not to match this interpretation. My favourite one is this. The temperature has been increasing constantly since 1910 except in the period from 1940 to the late 1970s. It is precisely in that period that CO₂ emission experienced one of its greatest jumps. The two hardest pieces of evidence that we have, actual CO₂ emission and temperature, appear to be loosely linked. There are other factors. How much of this extra man-produced CO₂ is actually remaining in the atmosphere? How much is being dissolved in the oceans?...

Javier Cuadros

Natural History Museum

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The editors