

Congratulations from the Common Reader

The Common Reader congratulates Professor Rodney C. Ewing on the occasion of his retirement as Principal Editor of *Elements*. Rod, as a Common Reader, I've been asked to address a tribute to you on this occasion, and also to describe the nature of your contributions to this utterly unique, inclusive, interesting, international, multisociety journal cum newsletter we all hold in our hands (or scroll on our screens!). Your editorial side will no doubt relish that I am faced with the somewhat complex literary task of praising you individually while simultaneously describing your achievements to many others. I can but try.

Even given your broad-thinking nature, Rod, it amazes me that in the year 2000 you could conceive of a (then-nameless) worldwide journal-newsletter hybrid that would unite the learned societies of those who study the mineral sciences. I well remember the Mineralogical Society of America council meeting in Reno, Nevada, when you presented your idea for the first time, with what I later learned was a characteristic combination of vision, enthusiasm, and creativity. Stunned silence ensued. (Perhaps we all thought it improbable you could achieve your goals in an ordinary human lifetime. I know I did.)

Graciously accepting MSA's collective lukewarm approval—"OK, Rod, give it a go," seems to me to have been the response—Rod began to enlist and inspire many others to give their utmost to help create *Elements*. He was clearly effective in his efforts. Today, *Elements* is an extraordinarily collaborative venture, a joint publication of the Mineralogical Society of America, the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the Geochemical Society, the Mineralogical Association of Canada, The Clay Minerals Society, the International Association of GeoChemistry, the European Association for Geochemistry, and the Société Française de Minéralogie et Cristallographie. Other societies will be added, for *Elements* was born to welcome all who study minerals. We all have Rod to thank for that.

Elements began publication in 2005, with Rod, Mike Hochella, and Ian Parsons sharing the masthead, along with the brilliant, energetic Pierrette Tremblay masterminding journal production and overseeing the art work. From the first, it employed a format almost unique in the geosciences. Each issue begins with a thematic section made up of guest-edited papers. The 2005 themes were "Fluids in Planetary Systems," "Diamonds," "Genesis: Rocks, Minerals and the Geochemical Origin of Life," "Toxic Metals in the Environment: The Role of Surfaces," and "Large Igneous Provinces and Environmental Change." The first two issues for 2006 were "User Research Facilities in the Earth Sciences," and "Arsenic." The thematic content is managed by distinguished scientists in the subfield of the mineral sciences described by the issue's title. These guest editors invite papers, but each submission is rigorously peer reviewed prior to publication. Unlike a typical journal, though, these papers are broadly written yet thorough reviews of major aspects of the theme. Ideally, a reader obtains an overview and the cutting edge at the same time. This publishing strategy is not without risks.

Luckily for us, fellow readers, Rod and his co-editors have chosen their thematic editors from literally the best research groups on Earth. Happily, all these individuals have significant editorial skills, as well as impressive scientific credentials. Thanks to the excellent editing teams, *Elements* has achieved an almost impossible union of broad readability and top-flight science content, just as Rod had described to the MSA council just short of six years ago. Not surprisingly, *Elements* is now indexed in GeoRef (used for the Science Citation Index in Earth Sciences), Current Contents, the Chemistry Citation Index, and the Science Citation Index-Expanded (i.e. the Web of Science). It is already an award-winning journal (and Rod an award-winning editor!), courtesy of the Association of Earth Science Editors.



Rod Ewing surrounded by Principal Editors Ian Parsons and Mike Hochella and Managing Editor Pierrette Tremblay at the first editorial meeting in April 2004

But *Elements* is far more than an exciting new journal. The thematic section is followed by news from each member society, book reviews, conference reports, a calendar of upcoming events, news from the editors, and advertisements. These sections are presented in a modern, easy-to-read, informative format that is light years away from typical society newsletters. I've caught myself plowing through all the plans, meetings, and other doings of society after society, just because these are fun and interesting to read.

Who gets *Elements*? It is sent to more than 7600 members of the eight member societies in 92 countries. More than 1200 libraries now receive it. Think of it! In only a little more than one year of existence, a new publication has achieved global impact on a branch of science. How did it happen? Because *Elements* not only highlights exciting research directions for a broad, worldwide audience, it connects all the scientists who read it. It provides us all with the valuable commodity of open information, that essential raw material we need to truly become a community. Rod, the community spirit that is embodied in *Elements* will be needed in these increasingly challenging times for mineral sciences research—many thanks for this benefit, one I'm sure you envisioned.

Elements is in every way a model for twenty-first century society publications. And although it obviously was not brought into being by one person, it is unquestionably Rod's creation. Indeed, he notes in his CV with well-justified pride that he is Founding Editor of *Elements*. For the simple reason that Rod has dedicated so much of himself to *Elements*, the magazine has already succeeded on an unprecedented scale. This is certainly owing to his vision, enthusiasm, and creativity, along with killer organizational skills—characteristics seldom united in an individual scientist, let alone one with so much drive and personal charm!

In summary, Rod, as a Common Reader of *Elements*, I have taken great pleasure in describing your achievements to my fellow readers. Congratulations upon your retirement from the editorial board of *Elements*. I can't wait to see what wonderful new things you will accomplish with all your free time!

Sorena Sorensen
Smithsonian Institution