

EDITORIAL MEETING IN BRIEF

The editors met on Thursday June 28 at the Frontiers meeting in Cambridge, England. Rod Ewing, founding editor, attended part of the meeting, and we welcomed his sage input. Although we have regular conference calls throughout the year, face-to-face meetings are invaluable: nothing replaces sitting around a table and bouncing ideas back and forth. The main items on the agenda were solidifying our line-up for 2008, and indeed three new themes were confirmed: nanogeoscience, platinum-group elements, and carbon dioxide sequestration. Watch for our December issue when we will present an overview of the 2008 topics. Many proposals and ideas for thematic issues have been submitted in recent months, and these will be considered for the 2009 line-up.

**DAVID VAUGHAN,
PRINCIPAL EDITOR, 2008–2010**

We welcomed David Vaughan, incoming principal editor for 2008, at our editorial meeting. Although David's term of office officially starts in January, when he will replace Ian Parsons who will be concluding his three-year term, David is now included in all our discussions. We will introduce David more formally in the first issue of 2008.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Every participating society appoints a representative to sit on the executive committee overseeing *Elements*. Eleven societies were represented at the executive committee meeting, convened and chaired by Peter Treloar. Members

of the executive committee joined the editors at the end of the day for a fruitful exchange of ideas and sharing of information.

ELEMENTS ON GEOSCIENCEWORLD

Elements is joining GeoScienceWorld, an aggregation of peer-reviewed journals that are indexed, linked, and inter-operable with GeoRef (see *Elements* vol. 1 no. 5, p. 313 and www.geoscienceworld.org). This will provide a high-quality online access to *Elements* articles.

ELEMENTS' IMPACT FACTOR

Elements received its first impact factor from the Institute of Scientific Information: 1.562 for 2006, its second year of publication. The 2006 impact factor of a journal is calculated as the number of citations received in 2006 for papers published in that journal in 2004 and 2005, divided by the number of articles published in those two years. As *Elements* just started publication in 2005, our impact factor was based on citations we received for 2005 papers. Thus, we are very pleased that our impact factor is as high as it is already. Papers that have cited *Elements* were published in the standard mineralogy and petrology journals but also in a wide range of journals on the fringe of our community, meaning we are reaching a wider audience.

**Ian Parsons, Bruce Watson,
Susan Stipp and Pierrette Tremblay**

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Congratulations to *Elements*, lead editor Michael Hochella, and guest editor David Mogk for organizing the April issue dealing with teaching mineralogy, petrology, and geochemistry, especially in the undergraduate curriculum. The online bibliography and resources through Carleton is a great addition. As in other matters, the "Triple Point" piece by Peter Heaney adds usefully to the discussion.

For what it is worth, I am an "end-user," working in an industry (mining) that needs people well trained in and enthusiastic about mineralogy and petrology. There is an expression in an unrelated field that seems *à propos*: we are never more than one generation from extinction. From this it follows that a prudent person would regard the teaching of the next generation as one of his or her responsibilities. I am of an age at which many of the great teachers with whom I was lucky enough to work have left us, so it is refreshing to see that there are still serious people committed to and involved in great teaching. As Professor Hochella points out and as the articles in the April issue illustrate, great teachers are, like great researchers, the product of intention, effort, and openness to improvements and to new ideas that challenge old beliefs; above all they are committed individuals. I can think of many wonderful people who were both great teachers and great researchers. Surely, that is an honorable, even exemplary, combination to which many of us can aspire.

Keep up the good work, teachers. And keep up the good work of maintaining balance in the range of interesting and important matters you bring us, *Elements*.

Mark J. Logsdon
Geochemica, Inc., California

EDITORIAL (cont'd from page 227)

are available to, for example, a bioscience department of equivalent standing. At resource-limited institutions, this funding reality affects decisions about faculty appointments. It is not easy to argue against the view that a biologist who has access to, say, \$1M/year in research funding is more valuable than a geologist who has access to only a fraction of that. Over a career, the difference in research income is substantial, and this is a powerful fact in the minds of those responsible for fiscal planning.

Most administrators are unaware of the remarkable evolution of the Earth sciences in recent decades. Although driven partly by advances in instrumentation, this change is due mainly to our heightened sensitivity to the interconnectedness of atmosphere, oceans, land, and life and the redesign of departments and curricula that has followed from this new perspective. The shift toward an Earth systems view has led many of us to see the environment as a unifying theme in the Earth sciences. It is natural to blame administrators for their failure to appreciate the significance of this change,

but such a reaction isn't likely to improve the standing of geoscience departments. As difficult as it might be, we need to acknowledge that the blame lies partly with us. With some exceptions, the geoscience community has not been aggressive or articulate in conveying the essence and importance of what we do and what we know, and this failure has allowed our image problems to persist in some academic circles. In his address to AGU members in San Francisco last December, Al Gore lauded us for having developed the methods and acquiring the data to understand global climate—but he also reprimanded us for not communicating our knowledge effectively. We need to work on communicating with administrators and thus help them understand the role of geoscience departments in education, research, and society. This is the best way to sustain the vitality of our field in universities worldwide.

We also need to recognize that the nature of our field is difficult for other scientists to appreciate. On the one hand, we are applied scientists, in the sense that we use the tools of chemistry,

physics, biology, and mathematics to study the systems of interest to us. On the other hand, our interests cover the spectrum from the very applied (resources, hazards, environmental remediation) to the purest and most fundamental of natural sciences, that is, simply wanting to understand how our planet works at all scales. The applied and the basic scientists among us make good partners within single departments, but this only renders us more enigmatic to those viewing us from other disciplines.

An important goal of the *Elements* editorial team is to make the essence of what we do more transparent to those outside the geosciences and, in so doing, to further the interests of our field. The guest editors and contributing authors are the vehicles through which *Elements* aims to do this, but you, our readers, can help keep us on track by sending us your views!

Bruce Watson²
Principal Editor

² Bruce Watson was the principal editor in charge of this issue.