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Deutsche Mineralogische Gesellschaft

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German Mineralogical Society

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Ulrich Bismayer

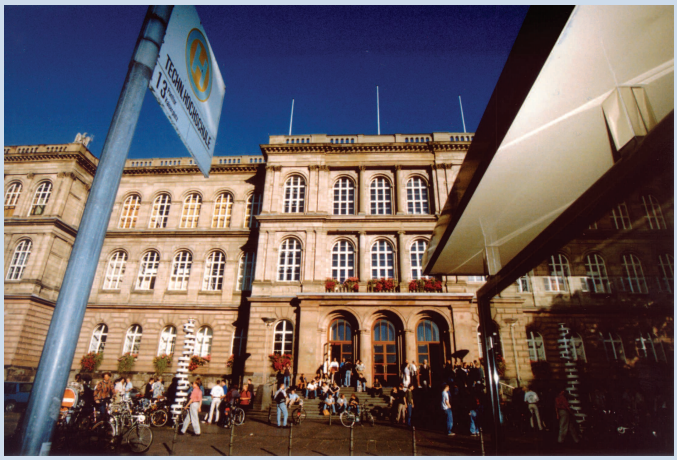
Two very different but timely topics highlighted in recent issues of *Elements* have raised lively interest among readers of the journal. The topics I have in mind are the nuclear fuel cycle and teaching mineralogy, petrology, and geochemistry. Both topics are present almost daily in the German press because they are the Achilles' heel of a country that relies on its technological achievements and on an economy strongly focused on exports to maintain its quality of life. Success can only be assured by an excellent education for Germany's children and students—its next generations. Due to the system's inertia, the consequences of failures in technological development and in the educational system show up only many years later. In my opinion there is a relationship between the topics.

An example: In 1967 our government began to deposit nuclear waste in an old salt mine called Asse II, which is located in the northeast of the country. The idea was to test long-term conditions and the stability of such waste disposal. The institutions involved assured the public that the salt system would be watertight. By 1988 the first ingress of water had been detected, and infiltration continues today. The recovery of the waste would take years and would be at immense cost. Why do I mention this? Because I want to remind the reader that (a) decisions made 40 years ago can trouble us today and (b) modern education and research must combine the best transfer of knowledge and very critical thinking to find the most reliable, efficient, and responsible solution, especially with respect to long-term problems like the example above.

The next "year of science" in Germany is 2008, which will be the "year of mathematics"—"der mathematische Blick." All geosciences rely heavily on a strong background in mathematics, and therefore geoscientists should support their mathematician colleagues in their educational work by contributing examples from their own field, not only at the university level but also in colleges and schools. The pupils of today are tomorrow's geoscience students, and disciplinary excellence will guarantee the interdisciplinary quality that I consider to be a definite need in the geosciences.

Ulli Bismayer
DMG President

SHAPING THE FUTURE
Deep-Sea Minerals and Mining



Congress and Workshop in Aachen, Germany
March 9–12, 2008

The congress "Shaping the Future – Deep-Sea Minerals and Mining" will take place March 9–12, 2008, at the Institute of Mineralogy and Economic Geology of the RWTH Aachen University (conveners: Prof. Dr. F.M. Meyer, Aachen, and Prof. Dr. P.E. Halbach, Berlin).

Due to the strong increase in demand for metallic raw materials combined with higher metal prices, ocean-floor deposits (nodules, crusts, and massive sulfides) are again the center of interest of many international raw materials experts. This interest is not only for base and precious metals, it is also for a number of strategically important metals that will play an increasing role in the fields of semi-conductors and solar cells. Examples of such metals are Co, Ni, In, Ga, Mo, Se, and Te. Research and development in this field will influence the industrial future and technological potential of industrialized countries.

Thus, it is our aim to bring together geoscientists, engineers, and raw materials economists, as well as students in the respective fields, for lectures and interdisciplinary discussions. The Aachen congress and workshop will consider future developments in this emerging field.

It will target four themes:

1. MANGANESE NODULES AND CRUSTS
2. SEAFLOOR MASSIVE SULFIDES
3. MINERAL ECONOMICS OF SEAFLOOR MINERAL DEPOSITS
4. DEEP-SEA MINING CONCEPTS AND PROCESSING

Workshop discussions will center on the future development of deep-sea mining and on the technological fields in which the metals from seafloor deposits can play an important role in the future. For further information, please visit the website

www.dsmm2008.de
or send an e-mail to **dsmm2008@iml.rwth-aachen.de**

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