

THIS ISSUE

"Phosphates and Global Sustainability" demonstrates how Earth science research can be applied to real-life problems. This was the focus chosen by Guest Editors Eugenia Valsami-Jones and Eric Oelkers, and we thank them and the cast of authors they assembled. They have made a commendable effort to cover their topic from several perspectives, to give you a flavor of the role phosphorus plays as a basic element of life and in the health of our environment. I was also pleased to receive a fascinating piece by Barry Dawson on his long association with the Oldoinyo Lengai volcano for 'Travelogue' (pp 138–139).

THANKS IAN

Ian wrote in his last editorial, "When you reach a certain age you tend to assume you are becoming a bit of a dinosaur" (*Elements* volume 4, pages 3–4). In spite of being the "senior" in our group, the two qualities that best describe Ian are his boyish enthusiasm—for life, for research, for his family—and his energy. He jumped right into the *Elements* adventure, took on tasks that seemed insurmountable, and pulled them off elegantly. Ian is also a gifted writer—and many of his editorials and 'Parting Shots' have struck a chord with readers. Ian has definite ideas on how things should be done, but at the same time, he shows a lot of flexibility and easily rallies to group decisions. In the last three years, we have drawn often from his vast experience and expertise, and this has helped us many times in planning and decision making. It has been a privilege for me to be associated with Ian and become his friend. On behalf of past principal editors Rod Ewing and Mike Hochella, and current principal editors Bruce Watson, Susan Stipp, and David Vaughan, I thank Ian for his enormous contribution to shaping the destiny of *Elements*. We will all sincerely miss him as part of the editors group. But he has already volunteered to take charge of 'Parting Shots', and we hope he will send a proposal for a future thematic issue on one of the topics very dear to his heart: feldspars and mineral defects.



Ian Parsons and Pierrette Tremblay in a pub at Kylesku, NW Scotland, featuring the geological map of Assynt as artwork (see *Elements* 3: 364–365)

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANET EARTH

2008 was proclaimed the International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE; www.yearofplanetearth.org) by the UN General Assembly in New York in December 2005. In practise, however, IYPE will run from 2007 to 2009. IYPE aims at raising global awareness of the great potential of the Earth sciences to improve the quality of life on the planet. IYPE envisages a significantly expanded role for the Earth sciences in building a healthier, safer, and wealthier society. The aim is encapsulated in the Year's slogan: "Earth Science for Society." The program is articulated around ten scientific themes:

- **Groundwater** – towards sustainable use
- **Hazards** – minimizing risk, maximizing awareness
- **Earth and Health** – building a safer environment
- **Climate** – the "stone tape"
- **Resources** – towards sustainable use
- **Megacities** – going deeper, building safer
- **Deep Earth** – from crust to core
- **Ocean** – the abyss of time
- **Soils** – the living skin of the Earth
- **Earth and Life** – the origins of diversity

Elements has covered several of these themes since its inception and will cover others in the near future. Our "Critical Zone" issue (v3n5) explored soil. Our upcoming June issue (v4n3) is on the deep Earth theme and our CO₂ issue (v4n4) will touch on the climate theme. Even though several issues have touched on groundwater, we are looking forward to publishing an issue devoted entirely to water (proposals welcome). In keeping with the outreach concept, a major component of IYPE, we introduce in this issue 'Outreach', a new feature in which interesting public education or educational projects/ideas will be described. Even though the Mapping Mountains project was not directly part of IYPE, it was such a nice outreach effort that we thought it would be perfect to launch the feature (pp 140).

MEET THE ARTISTS

Meet Michel Guay and Vincent Boivin, from Pouliot Guay Graphistes. I call them the magicians! They take unformatted text and turn it into the innovative colorful layout you see in each issue of *Elements*. I first met Michel in 1990 while working on a geological highway map of Quebec. The publisher had chosen him



Michel Guay

as the graphic artist in charge of design. Since then, we have collaborated on numerous projects, including ads, catalogues, posters, books, and booklets for the general public. So in the spring of 2004, when the steering committee struck by Rod Ewing to evaluate the feasibility of a new magazine was running out of steam and that people needed something concrete to think about, I naturally turned to Michel for mock-ups of what this new publication we were talking about might look like. When I asked Michel if he would like to see examples of other scientific publications I had gathered, he said he preferred not. This is perhaps the reason why *Elements'* design is so unique. The design is still remarkably close to those first mock-ups, and the first *Elements* logo has stayed.

In January 2006, Vincent Boivin was brought on board. Although he is a recent graduate, he has a lot of experience and computer savvy. Michel and Vincent cheerfully go back to the drawing board again and again, when things



Vincent Boivin

aren't quite right. The design of the cover, for example, can often be settled easily, but for some issues, several rounds have been needed before everyone was happy. I always look forward to spending a day with them to bring an issue to press.

NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Rod Ewing has been elected chair of the Executive Committee to replace Peter Treloar, whose two-year term ended at the end of 2007. We thank Peter for his efforts. Under Peter's chairmanship a letter of agreement was discussed and signed by each of the participating societies, a meeting of the committee was convened in Cambridge, and several new participating societies joined the *Elements* consortium. In his letter volunteering to chair the Executive Committee, Rod states: "When we created *Elements*, we worked hard on the magazine, and probably did not pay enough attention to the structure and purpose of the Executive Committee. I think that the future of *Elements* will require careful attention and discussion by the Executive Committee—particularly on matters of personnel and budget. I am prepared to work hard to make sure that this happens." We look forward to working with Rod and the Executive Committee on these issues.

Pierrette Tremblay
Managing Editor