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Société Française de Minéralogie et de Cristallographie

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is with great honor and pleasure that I start my term as president of the SFMC during the International Year of Planet Earth. This year, two important goals are to promote the interests of our society at large in the Earth sciences and to encourage more young people to study Earth sciences at the university level. Among learned societies, mineralogical societies benefit by being able to reach out to a large audience of mineral fans. This interface is of great significance in democratic societies, where it is critical to help the public understand the evolution of the changing world. In this context, a young girl or boy starting their first rock collection is a symbol of hope for the future of science. Conversely, the spreading of pseudo- or non-scientific practices, such as the so-called "lithotherapy," is a signal to specialists to weave more scientific knowledge into the fabric of modern societies.

We know however that it is difficult to cross the gap between the academic world and the general public. Museums are special places where anyone can approach science through mineralogy. France hosts three world-famous mineral museums in Paris. They are located at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, the École des Mines de Paris and the University of Jussieu. The reputation of these museums is largely due to their exceptional, mostly historical, collections. Yet France is not just Paris. Other French regions boast fascinating museums where people can become familiar with minerals and gems. It is a pleasure to mention the new Musée des Cristaux (Crystal Museum), which opened last summer in Chamonix, a legendary valley in the French Alps more renowned for its ski slopes and trails, and its mythical glacier, than for its rocks. The new museum dedicates a large area to the interesting mineralogical heritage of Mont Blanc. Several members of the SFMC have participated in this venture, including former president Bernard Poty. Over the past six months, the Musée des Cristaux has received more than 31,000 visitors, demonstrating the interest of the general public in mineralogy.

I am convinced that the International Year of Planet Earth will provide our community with many more opportunities to increase the visibility, attractiveness and notoriety of our discipline worldwide.

RELATED WEBSITES:

- www.mnhn.fr/ • www.musee.ensmp.fr/
- www.lmcp.jussieu.fr/impmc/collection/mineraux/
- www.chamonix.fr/animationculture/site_museecristaux/index.html

Patrick Cordier
President



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PATRICK CORDIER is a professor of physics at the University of Lille, where he graduated in materials science under the supervision of Jean-Claude Doukhan. His research is related to the deformation mechanisms of minerals, especially under extreme pressure conditions. He specializes in TEM and is particularly interested in the characterization of crystal defects and modern electron diffraction techniques (CBED, LACBED, precession electron diffraction, etc.). Recently, he developed a multiscale numerical modeling approach for the plastic deformation of minerals.



KARIM BENZERARA received a PhD in fundamental and applied geochemistry in 2002 from Paris 7 University, with a thesis on microorganisms and mineral interactions in arid environments. After a post-doctoral position at Stanford University in Gordon E. Brown Jr's group, he obtained a CNRS position at the Institut de Minéralogie et de Physique des Milieux Condensés in Paris. His research interests are biomineralisation, such as the formation of stromatolites, and bioweathering.



MICHA BYSTRICKY obtained his PhD in geosciences in 1998 from the Pennsylvania State University, where he studied the rheology of clinopyroxene and clinopyroxene-plagioclase aggregates under the supervision of S.J. Mackwell. He was a post-doctoral fellow at ETH Zürich studying the high-temperature, high-strain deformation of rocks. He has been at the LMTG at the University of Toulouse since 2004, working on mantle dynamics and experimental rock physics, and particularly on the rheology of rocks and minerals at high temperature and high pressure.

MICHEL DUBOIS obtained a PhD in geochemistry and natural resources from the University of Nancy. After a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Mexico, he joined the University of Lille in 1995, and since 2003 he has been a professor in the CNRS "Géosystèmes" unit. Inferring fluid compositions from fluid inclusions, he applies experimental methods to ore deposits, diagenesis and metamorphism using synthetic fluid inclusions and thermodynamics.



FRANÇOIS FARGES is a professor at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris and at the Department of Environmental and Geological Sciences at Stanford University. He collaborates with Gordon E. Brown Jr. on projects ranging from perovskite to biominerals, illustrating the evolution of mineralogy in the last 20 years. In charge of the national collection of minerals and gems, François supervises PhD students in environmental mineralogy, weathering, biomineralisation and historical mineralogy-archeometry, and uses techniques based on synchrotron radiation.



MICHEL MAQUET graduated from the University of Paris 6 and obtained a PhD in 1981 at the Laboratoire de Minéralogie et de Cristallographie in Paris. He joined Saint-Gobain Recherche, a major laboratory working in the field of materials, where he currently leads a research department. His research interests include point defects in glasses, the mineralogy of refractory materials and materials for the glass industry, and the high-temperature behaviour of refractory materials in contact with molten glasses and hot gases.



STÉPHANIE ROSSANO has been a lecturer at the Laboratoire des Géomatériaux et Géologie de l'Ingénieur of the University of Marne la Vallée (now University Paris-Est Marne la Vallée) since 2000. Her current research concerns the study of silicate and alumino-silicate glass structure by combining various spectroscopic methods (Mössbauer, XAFS, optical absorption spectroscopy, NMR spectroscopy) with calculation or modeling tools (molecular dynamics simulation, *ab initio* calculation).