

WELCOME TO THE SWISS SOCIETY OF MINERALOGY AND PETROLOGY

With this first issue of 2009, we welcome the 320 members of the Swiss Society of Mineralogy and Petrology, the fifteenth society to join *Elements*. Read their first news report on page 47.

FLY ME TO THE MOON

For the first time since June 2006, this issue of *Elements* takes us off the Earth for an up-to-the-minute look at our nearest neighbor in the solar system. Guest editor John Delano and his team of authors provide an exciting perspective on the Moon that addresses both old controversies and new interpretations.

INTRODUCING HAP McSWEEN



It is difficult to “let go of the reins” of a responsibility that has been exciting, enjoyable, rewarding, and challenging all at the same time—but it is the end of my third year as principal editor of *Elements* and it is time for me to step down.

I am leaving our no-longer-fledgling magazine in the very capable hands (and minds) of Pierrette Tremblay, Susan Stipp, David Vaughan, and a distinguished Advisory Board and Executive Committee, the latter of which is chaired by *Elements'* visionary founder, Rod Ewing.

I am especially pleased to pass the baton to an extraordinarily distinguished scientist and author in the person of Prof. Harry Y. (Hap) McSween. Some of our readers will remember that Hap has some history with *Elements*, having served as guest editor of a popular early issue (“Water on Mars”), published in June 2006. It is fitting that the present issue is revisiting “MPG” science in an extraterrestrial setting.

Hap McSween has been a member of the faculty at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville for 31 years and served as head of the Department of Geological Sciences for 10 years. He is currently University Distinguished Professor of Science and interim head of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences.

EDITORIAL (Cont'd from page 3)

Attracting young people into science of any kind and educating them as generalists is a unique contribution that geoscience departments can make to the modern world. No other science or engineering discipline does this, and if exploration of the Moon expands the attraction to science in general, then lunar science has value that goes way beyond the purely aesthetic.

The above observations aside, it is clear that our science has changed dramatically since the Apollo missions of the late 1960s and early 1970s. We would truly have reason to

Hap's scientific credentials and his administrative and editorial experience are remarkably strong and diverse. His undergraduate degree (chemistry) was earned at The Citadel, his master's in geology at the University of Georgia, and his PhD in geology at Harvard. Hap is a prolific writer, having published over 250 articles in scientific journals, many of them highly cited. He has also written three books for the popular press on meteorites and planetary science, as well as a leading textbook in geochemistry (which I particularly like because of its emphasis on “pathways and processes”).

Unlike most of us, Hap McSween's attention is drawn mainly to rocks falling from the heavens rather than to those already underfoot, and his published papers focus mainly on meteorite petrology and cosmochemistry. He was one of the original proponents of the idea that a handful of unusual meteorites came from Mars, and he has worked extensively on Martian meteorites. He has served on science teams for five spacecraft missions and is currently a co-investigator for the Mars Odyssey orbiter, the Mars Exploration Rovers, and the Dawn spacecraft mission.

Beyond his leadership as a practicing scientist, Hap has served our profession in many ways, including terms as president of the Meteoritical Society, chair of the Planetary Division of the Geological Society of America, and councilor of the Geological Society of America. He is a member of numerous advisory committees for NASA and the National Research Council.

Hap McSween will infuse new energy and bring a new perspective to the editorial office. I hope all our readers will join me in welcoming him to the *Elements* editorial team!

THANKS TO OUTGOING MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY BOARD

When the Advisory Board of *Elements* was initially formed, members were randomly given two- or three-year terms, but the three-year term stretched to four years! We thank Randy Cygan, Adrian Finch, Doug McCarty, Jim Mungall, Hugh O'Neil, Nancy Ross, Everett Shock, and John Gray for serving on the Advisory Board. We have benefited from the

worry if this were not the case, but it is especially crucial right now that we make every effort to convey the essence of our evolving field to administrators and policy-makers at all levels. The “center of mass” of many geoscience departments has shifted from solid-Earth subfields toward surface processes. I think this is a positive consequence of the more direct connection of “Earth-surface processes” to environmental issues and society. Relevance is an important driver, and the adaptability of our scientific community underscores the responsiveness of our science to the needs of society. But from the vantage point of scientific philosophy, a more compelling justification for the shift may be that

GOODBYE AND THANKS TO MINERALOGICAL ABSTRACTS

Mineralogical Abstracts has ceased to be published due to the new search tools and trends in our field. It was a great tool for my research: quick, focused and of great, great quality. I frequently felt surprised when reading abstracts of papers in which I was a co-author because I could not have described the study any better. It always seemed to me that the abstractors were very dedicated and insightful people. Thank you to those who provided this terrific tool, and I hope that the spirit in which they did it remains in our community.

Javier Cuadros
London

ELEMENTS IN POLAND

I wish to express my appreciation for sending me, since 2007, issues of *Elements*. The topics covered by this journal are of a real interest to me and my colleagues. The journal is a very valuable source of current information and is especially inspiring to me. Right now, I am working on the fourth edition of the book *Trace Elements in Soils and Plants* for Francis/Taylor/CRC Press, and I will acknowledge *Elements* for inspiration and a source of data. Accept my best wishes for further success in your activities.

Alina Kabata-Pendias
Warszawa, Poland

expertise of the outgoing members on numerous occasions, and they have provided many suggestions for potential thematic issues. Jim Mungall was guest editor for the platinum-group elements issue. We welcome the following members for the 2009–2011 term: John Brodholt, Norbert Clauer, Will Gates, George Harlow, Anhuai Lu, Robert Luth, David Mogk, Roberta Oberti, Terry Plank, Xavier Querol, and Meenakshi Wadhwa. They will be introduced more formally in a future issue.

E. Bruce Watson

Earth's near-surface is where many of the challenging and exciting questions in modern geoscience reside. As the articles in this issue make very clear, equally exciting questions are stimulated by consideration of Earth's companion in space, and these will help attract and inspire some of the next generation of the world's leading scientists.

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