



Mineralogical Society of America

www.minsocam.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Looking Back on 2008, Looking Forward to 2009



Nancy Ross,
2009 MSA
President

One of the enduring traditions of MSA is the recognition of emerging and established leaders in mineral sciences through distinguished awards such as the MSA Award, the Dana Medal, the Roebling Medal, and the Distinguished Public Service Medal. If you take a moment to browse through the list of recipients of these awards, you will be humbled by the number of stellar recipients, the history, and the sheer breadth of the research they have accomplished.

Given the desire to recognize as many noteworthy candidates as possible, MSA Council decided at its third meeting of 2008 to award the Dana Medal as it was originally intended, that is, as a recognition given to a scientist in mid-career who has made outstanding contributions to mineralogy/petrology/geochemistry but who has not previously received the MSA Award. Nominations for all awards should be received by the respective award-committee chairs by June 1, 2009. Applications for the MSA Grants from the Edward H. Kraus Crystallographic Research Fund and the MSA Grant for Student Research in Mineralogy and Petrology are also due in the MSA business office by June 1, 2009. For the first time, students will be able to apply online for these research awards.

MSA members are the lifeblood of our society, and we encourage you to renew early and online to help MSA save postage and staff costs. Once in a while, we (including yours truly) forget to renew, and sometimes our membership lapses. So please check to make sure that you have renewed your membership for 2009. If you haven't, don't be surprised if you get a call from Sorena Sorensen, the chair of the MSA Membership Committee. Your timely response is the best way to ensure that you don't receive pesky e-mails, letters, and phone calls reminding you to renew.

In addition to continuing your membership, you can help the society in other ways, and they only involve a few clicks of the keys on your computer. As many of you are aware, MSA is one of the founding organizations of GeoScience World (GSW). It began with the task force of October 2001 that suggested the notion, which was followed by the establishment of a steering committee to work out the details. MSA officially joined GSW in June 2004, and MSA publications were included in the launch of GSW in February 2005.

We can thank Alex Speer for his vision and stewardship throughout this entire process. Here is how you can help support MSA: MSA receives income for **every** article from *American Mineralogist* and *Reviews in Mineralogy and Geochemistry* (RiMG) downloaded from GSW. In 2007, GSW provided 10.6% and 11.1% of the income of *American Mineralogist* and RiMG, respectively. We'll have the numbers for 2008 in March 2009. So use your access to your institution's GSW subscription to download articles, and encourage your students and colleagues to do the same. You can also browse for the most read and most cited articles in *American Mineralogist*. Encourage the library at your home institution to subscribe to GSW, especially if it does not subscribe to *American Mineralogist* now.

As we look back on 2008, here are a few MSA trivia questions (the answers can be found on page 51):

- What topic generated most e-mail exchange on the MSA-talk list in 2008?
- What was the most read article in *American Mineralogist* in 2008 (as measured by GSW download requests)?
- Which of the RiMG volumes was the best seller in 2008?
- How old will MSA be on December 30, 2009?

As I close this letter, I have just made travel arrangements to attend the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, the largest gathering of mineralogists, gemologists, and collectors in the world. I look forward to meeting representatives from museums and educational institutions, as well as private collectors. I will also be collecting minerals for my students to "adopt" next year. If I don't see you in Tucson, I hope to see you in Toronto next May at the 2009 Joint Assembly meeting.

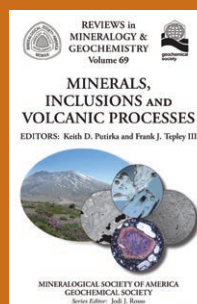
Nancy Ross
2009 MSA President

NOTES FROM CHANTILLY

- A new Reviews volume (volume 69) is now available: *Minerals, Inclusions and Volcanic Processes*. You can view a description and the table of contents and you can order online at the MSA website. There are also links to programs for calculations discussed in the book and to a collection of teaching activities on the topic, compiled in collaboration with the "On the Cutting Edge" program for undergraduate faculty development in the geosciences.
- *Diamonds of Siberia: Photographic Evidence for Their Origin*, a new book by Z. V. Spetsius and L. A. Taylor, is available through MSA. Description and ordering are online as well.
- Elsewhere in this issue is an announcement for the MSA-GS short course to be held June 19–21, 2009, and entitled Thermodynamics and Kinetics of Fluid–Rock Interaction. It will be held in Davos, Switzerland, before the 19th V.M. Goldschmidt Conference. Registration is at the Goldschmidt Conference website, and links to it can be found on the MSA website.
- All 2007 and 2008 MSA members have been contacted by mail, electronically, or both about renewing their membership for 2009. If you have not renewed your MSA membership, please do so. If you have not received a notice by the time you read this, please contact the MSA business office. You can also renew online anytime.
- The 2009 Gemological Research Conference, 21–23 August 2009, has been canceled by the Gemological Institute of America because of the downturn in the global economy.

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NEW TITLE – REVIEWS IN MINERALOGY & GEOCHEMISTRY



Mineralogical Society of America
and the Geochemical Society

Volume 69 – Minerals, Inclusions and Volcanic Processes

Keith D. Putirka and Frank Tepley III, EDITORS \$40

For more description and a table of contents of this book and to order online, visit www.minsocam.org or contact the Mineralogical Society of America, 3635 Concorde Pkwy Ste 500, Chantilly, VA 20151-1125, USA; phone: +1 (703) 9950; fax: +1 (703) 652-9951; e-mail: business@minsocam.org

FOUNDING OF MSA – A SIGNIFICANT EVENT IN TUMULTUOUS 1919

The years 2008 and 2009 are marked by a number of 90th anniversaries, many commemorating events in the aftermath of World War I, which ended in November 1918. Among these was the founding of the Mineralogical Society of America.

In February 1917, Edward H. Kraus (University of Michigan) circulated a letter among 51 mineralogists in the US and Canada inviting them to form an organization that might be called The Mineralogical Society of America. This was a result of discussions during several previous annual meetings of the Geological Society of America. The reason for founding such a society was to stimulate greater interest in the subject and give wider recognition to the work being done in the Americas. The greatest benefit of such a society was said to be a dignified, independent journal devoted exclusively to publishing mineralogical papers.

Of the 35 replies to Dr. Kraus's letter received by October 1917, 29 were favorable, but it was suggested that the formation of the society be delayed because of "unsettled conditions." World War I had been going on in Europe since August 1914, but the US had entered the war only in April 1917.

The first opportunity to organize a society after the war was at the 1919 Geological Society of America meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. Dr. Kraus redoubled his efforts to form a society during the spring and summer of 1919. He wrote a draft constitution and circulated it among a few individuals for comment in October 1919. An organizational notice was published in the November 28, 1919, issue of *Science*. Invitation letters to attend the organizational meeting were sent on December 12, 1919, to those who had earlier expressed interest in joining. Twenty-eight mineralogists attended the organizational meeting at the Harvard University Geological Museum on December 30, 1919, and MSA came into being. The participants were also invited to view the mineral collection of Albert C. Burrage in his home in the city. This impressive collection of gold specimens, along with Bisbee azurite and malachite samples, subsequently found its way into the Harvard Mineralogical Museum in 1948 as a bequest of Burrage.

Leading up to the organizational meeting, three issues occupied Kraus's attention: the name of the society, who should belong, and the promised publication.

Various formulations of the words crystallography, mineralogy, petrography, society, and America were suggested. One humorist pointed out that many minerals are "colloidal," but no one seemed anxious to belong to a Colloidal Society of America. In the end, it was concluded that the simplest name, Mineralogical Society of America, was the best.

Initially it was envisioned that only those who had written or published would be or would want to be members. It was concluded that the society would best serve the interest of the subject by having as large a following as possible. The society was to promote interest in crystallography, mineralogy, petrography, and allied sciences. Following society practices of the time, however, individuals who had published results of mineralogical research would be fellows whereas individuals engaged or interested in mineralogical work would be members.

Dr. Edgar T. Wherry proposed to Dr. Kraus in a letter dated September 28, 1919, that the *American Mineralogist* (first published in July 1916) be incorporated as the new journal of the society. Wherry felt that there would be little demand for two mineral publications in the Americas, and making the *American Mineralogist* a society journal would assure its future. The journal had been having financial difficulties, and shortfalls were being covered by what were then significant donations from Roebling and Burrage. As it turned out, the journal was accepted as the society's journal, along with its original name and "Journal of the Mineralogical Society of America" as a subtitle. In part,

this was at the insistence of the journal founders and some of its financial supporters. The first issue published by MSA was the January 1920 issue.

MSA also held its first annual meeting in 1920. Thereafter MSA focused its attention on improving the journal and the financial health of the society, a task made much easier by Washington Roebling's gift in 1927 but then more difficult by the Great Depression and WW II. Except for initiating the Roebling Medal in 1937 and the MSA Award in 1950, MSA remained pretty much the same for years. Things began to change at about MSA's 50th anniversary, slowly at first then more rapidly: special publications in the 1960s; short courses, the Reviews in Mineralogy series, and research grants in the 1970s; the MSA Lecture program, the AMU Awards, and a stand-alone office in the 1980s; the Distinguished Public Service Medal, monographs, textbooks, MSA-Talk, and a website in the 1990s; Mineralogy-4-Kids, Ask-a-Mineralogist, the Dana Medal, *Handbook of Mineralogy*, GeoScienceWorld, an online archive of the *American Mineralogist*, and *Elements* in the first decade of the 21st century. It would have been hard for the founders to imagine these things, and it would be just as difficult for us today to foresee the things to come.

J. Alex Speer

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2010 MEDALS AND AWARDS Nominations must be received by June 1, 2009

The **Roebling Medal** is MSA's highest award and is given for eminence as represented by outstanding published original research in mineralogy.

The **Dana Medal** recognizes continued outstanding scientific contributions through original research in the mineralogical sciences by an individual in the midst of his or her career and who has not previously been recognized as a recipient of the MSA Award.

The **Mineralogical Society of America Award** is given for outstanding published contribution(s) prior to the recipient's 35th birthday or within 7 years of the PhD.

The **Distinguished Public Service Medal** is presented to an individual who has provided outstanding contributions to public policy and awareness about mineralogical topics through science. The next award will be given in 2011.

Society **Fellowship** recognizes a member's significant scientific contributions. Nomination is undertaken by one member, with two members acting as co-sponsors. Form required; contact committee chair or visit MSA home page.

Submission requirements and procedures are on MSA's home page:
www.minsocam.org

IN MEMORIAM

IVAN BONEV – Member 1993

Answers to quiz questions:

(a) Commission on New Minerals, Nomenclature and Classification; Alarming New Trends; (b) Hazen RM, Papiineau D, Bleeker W, Downs RT, Ferry JM, McCoy TJ, Sverfensky DA, Yang H (2008) Evolution of Minerals. *American Mineralogist* 93: 1693-1720; (c) RIMG v. 68, Oxygen in the Solar System; (d) 90 years old.