

THIS ISSUE

With this issue, Guest Editors Emmanuel Fritsch and Benjamin Rondeau bring us into the fascinating world of gems and the challenges faced by people who study or work with them. In Parting Shots, George Harlow reminds us of the glamour and romance associated with some famous stones. Among our other features, two of them discuss asbestos, a term that has been misused by the legal and medical community: read Triple Point by Mickey Gunter (page 141) and Outreach by Tomas Feininger (page 196). As usual we are grateful to the authors of this issue for their diligence in meeting the deadlines and their willingness to keep working at their articles after multiple edits, and we thank all our contributors.

ELEMENTS AND GEOSCIENCEWORLD

Elements did very well during its first full year in GeoScienceWorld (GSW): with only 0.65% of the overall content posted on GSW, we garnered 2.01% of its total usage.

GeoScienceWorld (www.geoscienceworld.org) is an aggregate of society-run Earth science journals. Since its launch in 2005, it has experienced a steady growth in its number of subscribers and the number of journals it hosts. *Elements* became part of GeoScienceWorld in December 2007. Royalties paid to publishers are based on both content and usage.

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(www.elements.geoscienceworld.org). *Elements* is compensated every time a user from one of the GSW subscribers downloads a pdf or reads an html file.

If your institution does not subscribe to GSW, encourage your librarian to request a free trial period (www.geoscienceworld.org), so you and your colleagues can try it out—it might be a welcome addition to your online resources.

Elements also has a free trial issue posted on GeoScienceWorld, for which we get usage compensation; currently our trial issue is the “Phosphates” issue (v4n2); you can therefore download all the articles in that issue for free. We rotate the free issue regularly, so in a couple of months, the sample issue will be “Deep Earth” (v4n3).

Moreover, all the non-thematic content in *Elements* (Book Reviews; Editorial, Triple Point, Society News, etc.) is posted on GSW and is available to all.

2008 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Elements closed 2008 with a net positive balance of \$28,335. Income was \$308,729 and expenses were \$280,393 (equivalent to a cost of \$615 per published page). Our income came mainly from society contributions (56%), advertising (23%), and GeoScienceWorld (7.8%). The remaining income was from publication support from DOE (3.2%), page charges (2.8%), and other smaller sources of income. The sale of back issues has now become a significant source of income (3.3%), and we hope this will continue.

Pierrette Tremblay
Managing Editor

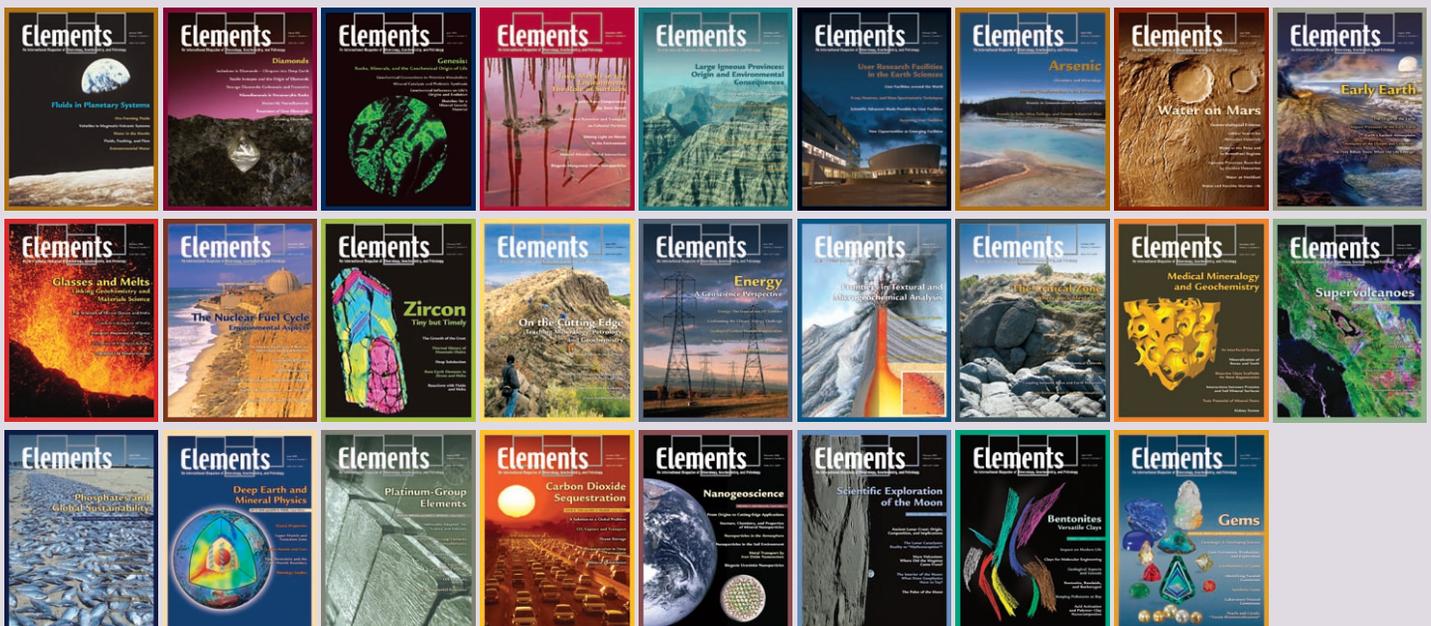
While catching up on my reading, I went through your thought-provoking article Lost in Translation in the February issue of *Elements*. I wanted to let you know that there are a few of us (not many though) who do get involved in the application of Earth sciences to societal problems. Since 1980 I have been applying isotopic techniques, primarily Pb and Sr, to many local problems—many involve hydrocarbon releases.

I developed what is called the ALAS model (Anthropogenic Lead ArchaeoStratigraphy), which has been used quite effectively since 1992 to estimate the year of leaded gasoline releases. I also, more recently, completed a study of lead paint in homes in order to assess the potential impact of lead on residents. The problem is that most of my work is “under the scientific radar,” being performed and supported by geotechnical firms and, of course, attorneys’ clients who are being sued.

However, on the bright side, the vast majority of my cases have been resolved with contamination being cleaned up by the responsible party or parties. From the standpoint of NSF/EPA funding, I believe that university scientists are not going to get funds to work on a corner gas station issue; nor will they take on such projects in lieu of supporting graduate students and their own research.

My training was under George Wetherill, then at UCLA, where I worked in the Labrador Archaean and on the Sudbury Impact Structure (early/mid-1970s). I happened to change my focus somewhat: as I tell my students, the age of the geologic materials I have worked on throughout my career has been inversely proportional to my age. So, I really appreciate your concern on this matter, and perhaps an issue of *Elements* might, in the future, solicit input from folks like me who work, not on global issues, but on matters of a more local nature, where people’s lives are indeed impacted. Thanks so much for your time and efforts.

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