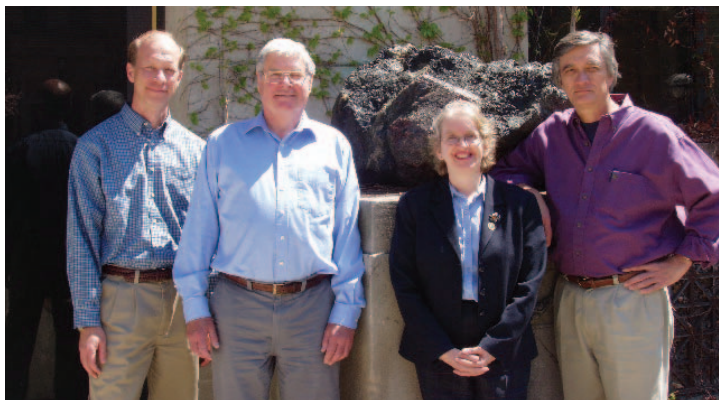


FIVE YEARS ON

Elements is approaching its fifth birthday. Volume 1, number 1, dated for January 2005, actually came out in November 2004. The first correspondence leading to the development of the magazine came from Rod Ewing early in 2001, a steering committee of representatives of various societies and organizations was formed in 2003, and by the time the first issue appeared the magazine was formally supported by five societies: the Mineralogical Society of America, the Mineralogical Association of Canada, the Mineralogical Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the Geochemical Society and the Clay Minerals Society. Remarkably, the editorial team, Rod Ewing, Mike Hochella, Pierrette Tremblay and myself, first came together only in April 2004, at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, to design the magazine and decide its working procedures. It seems a good moment to provide some pictures from that first meeting.



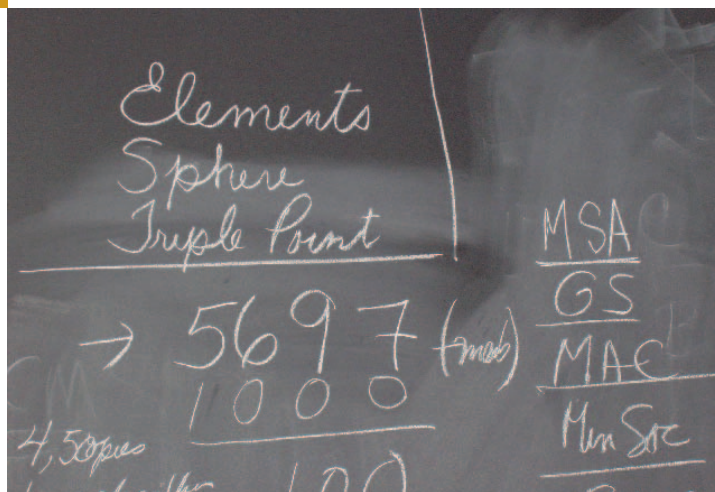
The founding editorial team, from left to right, Mike Hochella, Ian Parsons, Pierrette Tremblay and Rod Ewing

There are some wonderful lines in Ernest Shackleton's great book *Heart of the Antarctic*, in which he describes in great detail the preparations in London for his 1907 attempt to reach the South Pole: 'I was fortunate, too, in not being hampered by committees of any sort. I kept control of all the arrangements in my own hands, and thus avoided the delays that are inevitable when a group of men have to arrive at a decision on points of detail.' Shackleton's great strengths were his vision and determination, combined with remorseless attention to minute detail. In his book he lists every item of food (for two years) and every item of the men's underwear, including 24 colic belts, whatever they were!

Like Shackleton, the original *Elements* editors were not hampered by committees. The supporting societies wisely let us get on with it, and although I suppose the four of us perhaps constituted a com-



Mike Hochella pensive, Pierrette expressive



The three finalists

mittee, it was remarkably harmonious and good humoured. At our first meeting we discussed big issues like the name of the journal, and how topics and guest editors would be selected, right down to details like the Instructions for Authors. You can see the three finalist names in the photo of the blackboard. 'Sphere' was rejected as far too general. 'Triple Point', which I found attractive, was rejected for several reasons, including the belief that it would have become shortened to TP. As a European I had no idea why this was a bad thing, but apparently in North America, the world's leading region for the invention of confusing euphemisms, it refers to an essential provision found in restrooms. The motor industry puts a lot of effort into finding names for its cars that are not offensive in any language, and it seems we were in the same predicament.

The other picture captures Pierrette Tremblay at her energetic best, caught executing a full-on Gallic shrug. 'Tremblay' is an extremely common name in Québec, and all Tremblays descend from a single French settler who arrived in 1647. *Elements* readers have to thank that 17th-century pioneer for the genes that have given the magazine a style and flair that make it one of the most eye-catching and readable publications on your library shelves, a magazine now supported by 15 societies.

Ian Parsons

University of Edinburgh

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