



Mineralogical Society of America

www.minsocam.org

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Social Responsibilities of MSA



Dave Bish, President

Many of you are no doubt aware of the continuing discussions in the popular press and even in state and federal legislatures concerning the health effects of natural materials. For example, there was a move last summer to remove serpentine as the “State Rock” of California. Serpentine was officially designated as “State Rock” in 1965 as it symbolized California’s abundant natural wealth. At that time, asbestos was commonly employed in construction, where its durability and thermal properties were advantageous. Since 1965, the

material known colloquially as asbestos has come to be associated with several significant medical conditions. More recently, the question of asbestos mining in Quebec was again circulated on the MSA list server. Does MSA have a responsibility to be heard in this discussion? It appears that many citizens obtain their information on asbestos and its effects almost solely from television advertisements regarding litigation. As a result of lengthy exchanges on the MSA list server, many in the Society felt that we have a responsibility to educate the public regarding asbestos and that we must weigh in on this subject. The rationale behind joining the fray was that many discussions are conducted without an accurate portrayal of exactly what “asbestos” is from a geological and mineralogical perspective, and MSA counts among its members scientists who have studied “asbestos” minerals for their entire careers. Other scientific organizations around the world have also attempted to provide measured input into the discussion, and many have committees dedicated to the promulgation of accurate information on minerals.

After considerable discussion among several MSA members, a policy statement on asbestos was prepared. It covers several aspects of the asbestos discussion, including the fact that the term *asbestos* does not represent a single mineral or even mineral group. Ultimately we hope that MSA members will join with health scientists and policy makers

to drive a science-based discussion on the nature of the various fibrous minerals under the “asbestos” umbrella.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the purpose and guidelines for formulating an MSA policy statement, I include here some excerpts from our website. Being among the largest societies of professional mineralogists, petrologists, crystallographers, and geochemists in the world, MSA bears a responsibility for providing international leadership on issues that affect, and are affected by, the mineral sciences. These topics can include governmental policies involving the study, usage, and regulation of Earth materials. An MSA policy statement represents our official stand on the issue of interest.

The asbestos policy statement has been evaluated by the MSA Executive Committee and has been posted on the MSA website for a three-month comment period. In order to facilitate an orderly comment period, Executive Director Alex Speer will review all comments before posting them to the website.

Returning to the proposed legislation in California, in the end, after considerable discussion of the issue, including input from many mineralogists and geologists, the proposal to outlaw “serpentine” as the California “State Rock” died in the Legislature. But we are certain to witness further similar actions around the world, fueled in part by inaccurate and unscientific discussions, and we hope our policy statement will inform the process.

I do hope that you find the asbestos policy statement thought-provoking. It is likely that some will consider that the policy has gone too far; others will feel that it has not gone far enough. In either case, please take advantage of the comment period and provide MSA with your feedback.

For more information on MSA policy statements, you can visit our website at www.minsocam.org/MSA/policy.html.

David Bish

President, Mineralogical Society of America

NOTES FROM CHANTILLY

■ Among the many changes proposed in the draft MSA 1972 Constitution/Bylaws was the addition of the requirement that MSA own the copyright of anything that is published by the Society, though the requirement could be waived by approval of the Council. The only explanation for the inclusion of this requirement was that it was designed to safeguard the legal rights of the Society. The 1972 Constitution/Bylaws was adopted by a membership vote of 924 to 23 in 1973. This is where matters stood until fall 2010, when MSA Council voted to ask authors of articles to sign a license granting MSA the exclusive right to publish their work for the life of the copyright rather than to transfer ownership of the copyright to MSA.

This action is to satisfy the increasingly common desire by authors or their institutions to retain copyright ownership of their works, and the evolving policies of funding agencies that wish to archive the research they fund and make it publicly accessible. The MSA license attempts to retain all the practical operational advantages of MSA’s previous policy of requesting the transfer of copyright ownership and in a way that does not add significantly to the cost of publication. It does not alter the long-standing relationship between MSA and its authors, nor does it change MSA’s philosophy about copyright. It is a compromise of many competing interests, with MSA ensuring the integrity and

financial health of its publications in the face of technology, expectations, and unfunded mandates that make unauthorized distribution all too easy. The one downside is that a license agreement is a longer document than a copyright ownership transfer.

Whether the works are owned or licensed, having such rights allows MSA to publish the material in its journals, books, and magazines, or on the web; to migrate its publications to new formats; to grant permission to abstracting and indexing services to include the references to MSA publications; to grant permission to others for copying beyond the narrow limits of fair use for classroom and other scientific purposes; and to oversee the appropriate use of any published works. MSA is a locatable, long-term point of contact allowing these things to happen even if the author can no longer be located.

The license agreement gives *American Mineralogist* authors all the same rights they enjoyed previously. They will be able to continue to include their work in their other publications, present it at meetings, and use it for teaching. MSA will disseminate our authors’ works as broadly as possible. But the license includes an important new right for authors.

Cont’d on page 133

Notes from Chantilly *Cont'd from page 132*

Authors can post a copy of what is termed the "Accepted Manuscript" 12 months after appearance of the paper in the journal. The "Accepted Manuscript" is the version of a manuscript accepted for publication following peer review but prior to editing, layout, and proofreading. The posting can be to the authors' website, their institutional digital repository, or their funding body's designated archive, provided the original publication is acknowledged by a note or a citation and a hyperlink is included to the MSA Publication website. For those who desire to post the work as published in the MSA publication, the Open Access/Open Archive mechanism is available.

■ MSA will have electronic balloting for the 2011 election of MSA officers and councilors. The slate of candidates for the 2011 MSA Council election is as follows: president: Michael F. Hochella Jr.; vice president: John M. Hughes and Theodore C. Labotka; secretary: Henry L. Barwood and Andrea Koziol; councilors (two to be selected): Christine M. Clark, Adam J. R. Kent, Kimberly T. Tait, and Allan H. Treiman. Darrell Henry continues in office as treasurer. Continuing councilors are Wendy A. Bohrson, Sumit Chakraborty, Pamela C. Burnley, and Guy L. Hovis.

A message with voting instructions will be sent in April to the current e-mail addresses of MSA members. Make sure MSA has your most recent e-mail address! Those who do not wish to vote online can request a paper ballot from the MSA business office. As always, the voting deadline is August 1. Individuals elected to office decide on the direction of the Society. Voting is an important job for all MSA members.

VOTE 2011 MSA ELECTIONS

J. Alex Speer
MSA Executive Director
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The Mineralogical Society of America

2012 Grants for

Research in Crystallography

from the Edward H. Kraus Crystallographic Research Fund with contributions from MSA members and friends

Student Research in Mineralogy and Petrology

from an endowment created by MSA members



Selection is based on the qualifications of the applicant; the quality, innovativeness, and scientific significance of the research as described in a written proposal; and the likelihood of success of the project. There are three US\$5,000 grants with no restrictions on how the funds may be spent, as long as they are used in support of research. Application instructions and online submission are available on the MSA website, www.minsocam.org. Completed applications must be submitted by June 1, 2011.

IN MEMORIAM

FRED W. FARWELL – Life member, 1947

KURT NASSAU – Senior Fellow, 1968

JOHANNES H. SCHELLEKENS – Member, 2008

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR 2012 AWARDS

Nominations must be received by June 1, 2011

The **Roebbling 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.

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

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

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

INVITATION TO REQUEST A 2011–2012 MSA DISTINGUISHED LECTURER

The Mineralogical Society of America is again offering a Distinguished Lecturer program for the 2011–2012 academic year, with the arrangement that the MSA will pay travel expenses of the lecturers and the host institutions will be responsible for local expenses, including accommodation and meals. The program will include three lecturers, one of whom resides in Europe. Depending on the response, one or more lecture tours will be arranged outside North America.

The 2011–2012 Distinguished Lecturers and their lecture titles are **Ethan F. Baxter** (1) Making a long Story Short: Evidence for Brief Pulses of Metamorphism, (2) Garnet: Tree Rings of Crustal Evolution, and (3) Multiple Paths, Multiple Sinks: The Untold Story of Noble Gas Thermochronology; **Sumit Chakraborty** (1) How Long Do Geological Processes Last? – The Long and the Short of It and (2) What Does the Hop of an Atom Tell Us about the Motion of Tectonic Plates?; and **Nancy Ross** (1) Crystal Chemistry in the 21st Century and (2) Exploring Hydrogen Environments in Minerals with Neutrons. If your institution is interested in requesting the visit of an MSA Distinguished Lecturer, check the website for lecturers and titles and e-mail your request to the Lecture Program Administrator: Prof. Steven R. Dunn, Dept. of Geology & Geography, Mount Holyoke College, 50 College Street, South Hadley, MA 01075-6419, USA; e-mail: sdunn@mholyoke.edu; tel.: +1 (413) 538-2531; fax: +1 (413) 538-2239.

The lecture program is designed to run from September 2011 through April 2012. Lecturer requests received by May 12, 2011, will be given priority. Late applications will be considered on a space-available basis. In making your request please include (1) airport proximity from, and travel time to, your institution; (2) the name of a contact person at your institution for the months of May and June (when Lecturer schedules will be assembled); (3) contact e-mail addresses and phone numbers; (4) flexibility on Lecturer preference; and (5) for schools outside the USA, the starting and ending dates of academic terms. Because of travel and schedule constraints, it is normally not possible to satisfy requests for tightly constrained dates, such as seminar days.