

THIS ISSUE

The very first issue of *Elements* had as its theme “Fluids in Planetary Systems.” In it, Guest Editor R. E. Bodnar and invited authors explored the role of fluids in ore deposits, magmas, the mantle, extraterrestrial bodies, faulting, and flow. More than 6 years later, we revisit the theme of fluids, but the focus this time is on water at the Earth’s surface and the ways to ensure its sustainability for future generations—one of the many societal issues we face today.

Many publishers have several books dealing with water. What could an issue of *Elements* contribute in its 36 pages of thematic content? Guest Editors Hering, Zhu, and Oelkers have chosen to cover some key issues in which mineralogists and geochemists can contribute meaningfully.

The topic is global, but it is also close to all of us at the local level. Here are some of the “water issues” that are close to me.

At the INRS research center where I have my office, the debate over bottled water is ongoing. Many are adamant that bottled water should be banned. We willingly pay up to the equivalent of the price of a liter of gas for a resource that we can get out of our tap for next to nothing and that scientists insist is of high quality in this part of the world.

I was heartened to learn about Project Eau Nicaragua: 11 INRS graduate students in “sciences de l’eau” are preparing to do field work in a rural area of Nicaragua. The project has many pedagogical objectives but will deal with the real water problems. The students will work with the local population to implement solutions. Follow their work at www.eunicaragua.net.

A close relative is dealing with an artesian well contaminated with *E. coli* bacteria. In Canada, the deterioration of groundwater made the headlines in 2000 when 7 people died and 5000 fell sick in the small Ontario town of Walkerton; the well providing their water became contaminated with a virulent strain of *E. coli*. This crisis highlighted the need to adequately train employees who deal with water-quality controls.

The exploration for shale gas has been a very controversial issue in the province of Quebec and in many other parts of the world. In Quebec, public opposition is strong, with many citizens clamoring for a moratorium on exploration for shale gas. Citizens’ concerns range from fear of their water well being contaminated to their property losing value, and there is also the underlying question, “Should we keep this resource available for future generations?”

Jordan Bay, Nova Scotia, where my family’s summer home is located, is the proposed site of a fish farm. How will this affect our neighbors who fish the bay for lobster every fall and spring?

NEW FEATURES

Two new features make their debut in this issue: CosmoElements will keep us in touch with exciting discoveries in cosmochemistry. As pointed out by Principal Editor Hap McSween in his editorial (7: 3), “Geology would do well to take advantage of the widespread interest that planetary exploration engenders.” We hope to provide short articles that can be used in the classroom or keep you up to date on the latest space missions carrying geochemical or mineralogical instruments.

The idea for A Life in Science column originated in a brainstorming session with Penny King during the last GSA meeting. We hope to provide tools and food for thought to Earth science graduates at all stages of their careers, but perhaps with emphasis on the 30% or so of our readers entering, or about to enter, a career in the geosciences.

SEE YOU AT GOLDSCHMIDT!

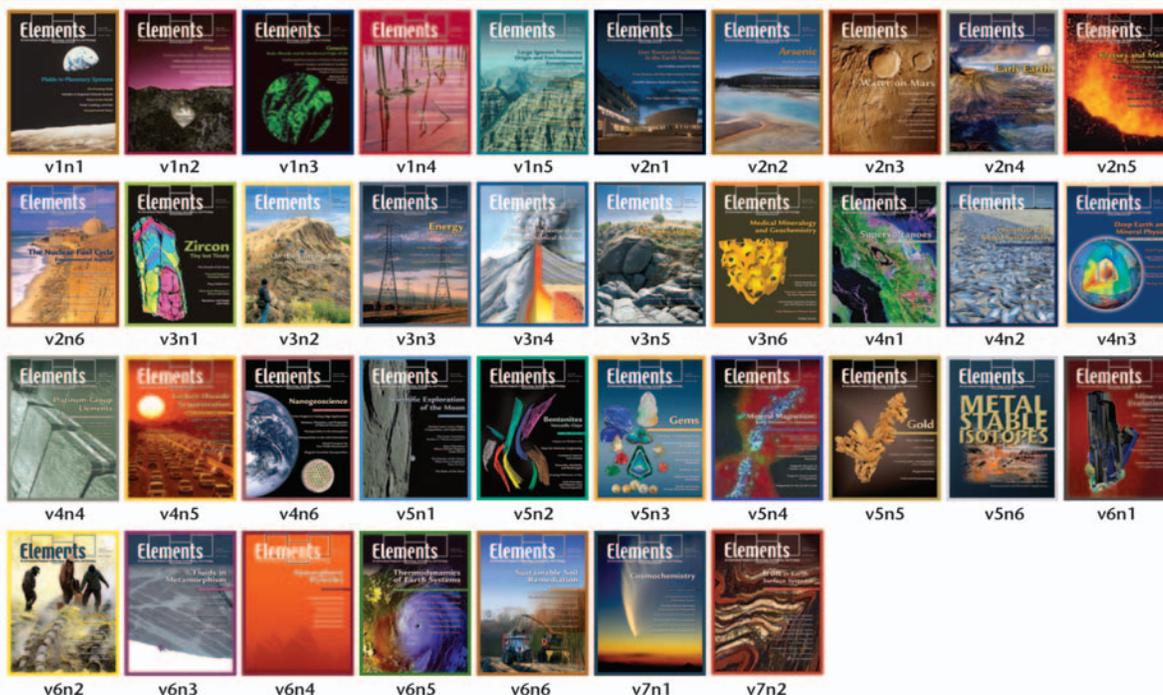
Elements will have a booth at the Goldschmidt Conference in Prague. Make sure to drop by and say hello and let us know how we are doing.

WE ARE ON FACEBOOK

Elements now has its Facebook page: www.facebook.com/elementsmagazine. It will offer an easy way to obtain timely information. Thanks to Seth Davis of the Geochemical Society who helped me set it up.

Pierrette Tremblay, Managing Editor

Back issues of *Elements* for the classroom



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EAWAG

We thank EAWAG for its support of this issue and congratulate the organization on its 75th anniversary.