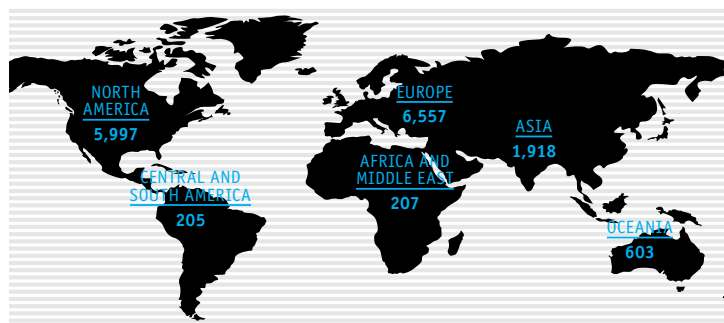


THIS ISSUE

Have you ever wondered why farmers plow their fields every spring? If you read Dong's paper in this issue, you will learn that one of the purposes of tilling and plowing (and farmers no doubt do not know this!) is essentially to reoxidize structural Fe(II) in reduced smectite, thus counteracting the effects of microbes working hard to reduce the iron in clay minerals present in the soil. The more we learn about the interactions between microbes and minerals, the more complex the subject becomes. In his article, Southam reminds us that there are no bad or good microbes, only microbes exploiting favorable redox conditions to support their own lives. Located at the intersection of mineralogy and biology, this growing field of investigation requires multidisciplinary research teams: just glancing at the journals referenced in this issue is enlightening in this respect. Guest Editors Anhuai Lu and Hailiang Dong have chosen to highlight the applications of this research to remediation. This issue brings several contributions from Chinese colleagues; I hope you will enjoy the Chinese examples illustrating the articles.

MEMBERSHIP EVOLUTION

The first issue of *Elements*, in January 2005, was printed at 9000 copies; we now print 17,000 copies. There has also been a big shift in membership distribution: in 2005, US members accounted for 45.6% of the total readership, compared to 32% in the last mailing. Current member distribution is shown on this world map.



Geochemical Perspectives

You have either seen ads about *Geochemical Perspectives* or received the first two issues. Congratulations to the European Association of Geochemistry for launching this new publication, just as different from *Elements* in approach as could be: while *Elements* focuses on six short review papers on a topic, *Geochemical Perspectives* provides a lengthy overview of a theme written by one or two researchers and reflecting their personal experiences.

ABOUT DUPLICATE COPIES – PART 1

From time to time, we receive requests like the following: "I received two copies of the last issue; please eliminate this duplication of mailing." *Elements* started up on a shoestring budget. Every decision was taken with a view to keeping the administrative overhead as low as possible. When faced with the issue of what to do about duplicate memberships, we studied the overlap in the memberships of the five founding societies and found it to be 20% (it has since stayed remarkably constant). We assume that most members do not want to receive multiple copies, so we do our utmost to eliminate duplicates. The savings are passed on to the member societies. If we were to ship all duplicate copies, the fee to societies, currently \$15 per member, would need to be increased by about \$3 per member.

For every mailing, the participating societies are asked to send their up-to-date member database in a standardized format. Alex Speer at MSA merges them. The software pairs potential duplicates, and each case has to be examined by a human who decides if it is indeed a duplicate. We estimate that we eliminate more than 99% of the duplicates: trying to eliminate all duplicates would be a very time-consuming task. You can help us eliminate duplicates by making sure you provide the same address for all your society memberships. But if you still receive a duplicate copy, put it to good use: use it as a promotional tool; give it to a colleague or student interested in the topic; or leave it in the students' lounge.

On behalf of the editorial team,

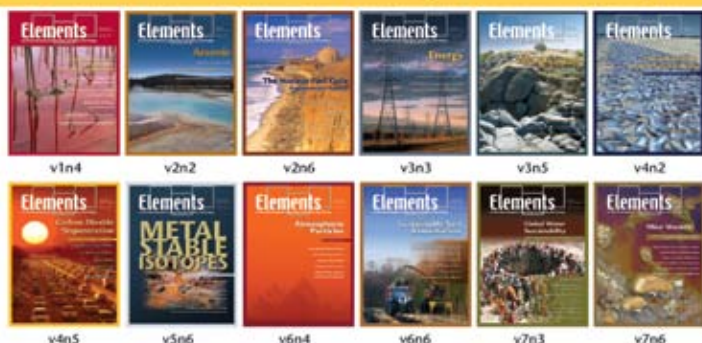
Pierrette Tremblay (tremblpi@ete.inrs.ca), Managing Editor

ROBERT HOWIE • 1934–2012



Elements echoes Tomas Feininger's words (from a posting on the MSA talk list). "Prof. Robert A. Howie died Saturday, 10 March. He was 88. Truly a loss to the mineralogical community. In 1962 (fifty years ago!), with the publication of the first volumes of the five-volume set of 'Deer, Howie and Zussman', Bob and his two tireless horsemen did remarkable service to the mineralogical-petrological community. Phenomenally productive through his long life, Bob was not only a brilliant mineralogist, but a fine person. He leaves a void to all readers of this post and will be missed. In 2005 Bob sent me what he thought was the only photo of the threesome together taken in 1976. The three are, of course, in the correct order (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Deer, Howie, and Zussman). Prof. Deer (on the left, pipe in hand) was a life-long pipe smoker and lived to 93. Prof. Howie relied on a cane, the result of a wound received in combat in Europe."

Tomas Feininger
Université Laval, Québec, Canada

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