



International Mineralogical Association

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Walter Maresch,
IMA President

Founded in 1958 to promote and further international cooperation in the mineralogical sciences, the IMA can point to more than 50 years of rich and varied history. Nevertheless, the years from 2010 to 2012 may well come to be considered a transition period of considerable importance. The revision of the IMA constitution was finalized by delegate voting at the 20th General Assembly in Budapest in 2010. The new rules were put into practice during the IMA business and Council meetings at the European Mineralogical Conference 2012 (EMC²⁰¹²) in Frankfurt, 2–6

September. Past President Takamitsu Yamanaka was the last long-serving Council member of the “old guard.” In the future, officers and councilors will be replaced on much shorter cycles (see F. Wall, *Elements*, 2010, p. 342). I will be president for the next two years, succeeding Ekkehart Tillmanns. In addition, the delegates at the second IMA business meeting unanimously voted for Sergey Krivovichev as the new 1st vice-president (i.e. president-elect for 2014) and Jane Gilotti as a new councilor. As we look forward with this new Council, we regretfully also have to look back. Nicolay P. Yushkin, a former councilor who went on to serve as 2nd vice-president from 2001 to 2010, passed away shortly after the EMC²⁰¹² meeting. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his colleagues and family.

During the Council and business meetings, Vice-President Sabine Verryn presented a status report on preparations for the 2014 IMA General Assembly in South Africa; these preparations are coming along very well. See the banner on this page highlighting the meeting logo and website. As a country with a large mining and mineralogical industry, as well as strong mineralogical, geological, and geochemical research initiatives, South Africa is highly appropriate to host such a meeting. Calls for session proposals have led to a comprehensive array of topics and themes, and an extensive list of exciting field trips has been compiled. In addition, the organizers are raising sponsorships to assist students and working scientists from the developing world. For all these reasons, I urge you to give IMA2014 and Johannesburg a prominent place in your 2014 meetings calendar.

The second business meeting also clarified the venue for the IMA General Assembly in 2018. After a convincing presentation by Pete Williams at the first business meeting, the delegates unanimously voted to accept Australia’s offer to hold the General Assembly in Melbourne.

The EMC²⁰¹² meeting in Frankfurt (see report in the December 2012 issue of *Elements*) was a resounding success. We owe a debt of gratitude to local organizers Gerhard Brey and Heidi Höfer and their team. This meeting signaled a new intermediate level of cooperation among mineralogical societies on a regional scale. For EMC²⁰¹², ten European societies took the lead, but participation was far wider. Alternating with IMA general assemblies, such regional meetings will enrich and



The 2011 IMA Medal for Excellence in Mineralogical Research was awarded to David H. Green at the EMC²⁰¹² meeting in Frankfurt.

strengthen international cooperation in mineralogy. The idea certainly warrants serious consideration elsewhere in the world. A highlight at EMC²⁰¹² was the presentation of the IMA Medal for Excellence in Mineralogical Research to David H. Green. The next medal will be presented in 2014.

As you read this, a totally rejuvenated IMA website (a task initiated by former secretary Maryse Ohnenstetter) will be operational and should offer discussion forums from the commission or working group level up to the international member level. An IMA archive has finally been established, thanks to diligent help from colleagues in Budapest, and calls for material will be going out at intervals in the future. Plans are also underway to identify a mineral of the year.

My personal feeling is that IMA needs to become more assertive. The naming and classification of minerals is only one of the tasks that IMA is charged with; yet this aspect is often the only one associated with IMA. Perhaps many underestimate the volume of work accomplished by the Commission on New Minerals, Nomenclature and Classification. Clearly, mineral classification schemes of complex mineral groups will never be able to please everyone. Some want no firm rules at all whereas others have even suggested that IMA also consider the legal ramifications of defining mineral species that pose health risks (how could we possibly acknowledge jurisdiction in 38 different countries?). My Latin teacher used to answer my complaints with the argument that rules are a prerequisite for functional language and science, even if people on the streets in ancient Rome were not forced to and most probably did not speak grammar-book Latin. It seems that an atmosphere more conducive to compromise might help us all here. On the one hand, colleagues with strong feelings on classification should get involved as early as possible in the decision-making process, which is open to anyone; on the other, some leeway should be possible to encompass historical definitions that have existed for many years.

Walter V. Maresch, IMA President

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21st General Meeting of the International Mineralogical Association
1 - 5 September 2014 • Sandton Convention Centre, Gauteng, South Africa
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