GOLDSCHMIDT 2014 SACRAMENTO*

For many, attending the Goldschmidt Conference has become an annual pilgrimage. This year, more than 2400 of us converged on Sacramento, California, for the June 8–12 meeting. The first day of the conference broke temperature records for the day, but fortunately the weather cooled nicely by Tuesday evening. The capital of California, Sacramento is a modern, clean town with wonderfully tall trees lining the side streets. Its history is linked to the Far West, the gold rush, and the development of the transcontinental railway.

The Sacramento convention center was a great facility and was conveniently located across from the beautiful park surrounding the Capitol building. The exhibits and poster areas were in the same hall and were just two escalators down from one of the two blocks of lecture rooms. Getting to the second block required some walking, but some effort was obviously made to group similar topics in neighboring rooms.

Every year the schedule is tweaked a bit, and this year, oral sessions ran from 8:30 till 11:30 and 14:00 to 17:00, and a dedicated poster session followed until 19:00. Wednesday afternoon was devoted to posters only. The plenary talks were held at 11:30 every day and were preceded by awards presentations. On Monday, Pamela Conrad (NASA Goddard Space Flight Center) discussed the various criteria to consider when defining the habitability potential of Mars. On Tuesday, Tim Elliott (University of Bristol) talked about the implication of a nonchondritic terrestrial Mg isotope composition. On Wednesday, as EAG president, Chris Ballentine (University of Oxford) gave a talk on volatiles in Earth's mantle. On Thursday, Andrea Foster (USGS) and Christopher Kim (Chapman University) presented very interesting talks on the environmental legacy of California's gold rush. And on Friday, Hope Jahren (University of Hawaii) told us about all that the carbon isotope composition of plant tissue can reveal.

A highlight was the two-day union session "*Elements*: 10 Years Old." This session was proposed by Georges Calas and the *Elements* editorial team and was enthusiastically received by the scientific committee. Over two days, 24 presenters delivered 30-minute keynote or contributed talks. All were on topics previously covered in *Elements*, and all presenters were current or past principal editors, authors, or guest editors.

Many field trips were on offer before and after the conference, introducing participants to the great western US geology (see sidebar for one such trip).

A lot of effort and thought went into making the 660 student attendees feel welcome. In fact, the Sacramento Goldschmidt made a giant leap forward in this area. Indeed, a successful scientific career is not just about being good at your science; it is also about interacting with colleagues and funding agencies, communicating clearly through your writing, making the right career choices, juggling career and family life, and more. To this end, Adina Paytan, Dominique Weis, and Diane Hanano put together a very popular series of lunchtime workshops and seminars covering many of the above-mentioned lifestyle topics as well as subjects like how learning works, grant writing, dual careers in academia, and teaching and learning activities in geochemistry. Every registered student was entitled to two free lunches and free admittance to any of these events, which were all well attended. For example, "How Learning Works: Useful Techniques for Future Teachers," organized by MAGNET (Multidisciplinary Applied Geochemistry Network), had an attendance of about 80 (www.magnet.eos.ubc.ca/goldschmidt-workshops-2014). Hopefully, these informal seminars/workshops will become an integral part of future Goldschmidt conferences and contribute to the development of our young scientific community.

A mentoring program was a major innovation of Goldschmidt2014, allowing new attendees to be matched with professionals or Goldschmidt veterans. Almost 300 people participated in this brand-new program—200 students and 100 volunteer mentors—and they met daily throughout the meeting. Some of these new relationships are even continuing post-conference.

The Cambridge Publications staff was very helpful and energized as always. I especially appreciated that they took time to visit every exhibitor to introduce themselves and check that everything was all right.

The conference had major corporate sponsors—NU instruments, The Geochemist Workbench, Thermo Scientific, and IsotopX—and the student program was sponsored by several more. I quite enjoyed visiting just about every exhibitor. Some of them, like Savillex, get ideas for the development of new products by listening to customers; at this conference they were showing a prototype of a new product that will be launched in the coming year. CAMECA celebrated its 85th anniversary with a cocktail to thank everybody for their contribution to their successful history.

All in all, another successful Goldschmidt Conference, establishing exciting new traditions for the future!

Pierrette Tremblay, *Elements* Executive Editor

* See also Goldschmidt 2014 photo highlights on page 307.

A TASTE OF TERROIR IN THE NAPA VALLEY

After a week-long conference, what better way to unwind that to spend a day exploring the terroir of the Napa Valley, world-renowned for the diversity and quality of its wines. "Terroir" expresses the relationship between the geology and soil on which the grapes are grown and the wine produced from those grapes. After a warm welcome from our field trip leader, Kenneth Verosub, we headed for the Robert Mondavi Institute for Wine and Food Science on the University of California–Davis campus. There we toured the state-of-the-art Teaching Winery and Teaching Brewery and learned about the history of wine production in California.

Tasting Pinot Noir at Ancien Wines. Photo: Azam Soltani Dehnavi

En route to the Napa Valley, our field trip leader kept up an interesting and entertaining running commentary about the geological and human history of the area. Our next stop was Ancien Wines in the Coombsville district of the Napa Valley, where we tasted four Pinot Noir wines made from different lots by the same wine maker, Ken Bernard, who produces small lots of Pinot Noir from several exceptional sites in the Valley. From there we drove the Silverado Highway to the Culinary Institute of America in St. Helena. Along the way we passed several spectacular outcrops of Sonoma volcanic rocks. Our afternoon stop was at the Diamond Creek Vineyards in Calistoga, where we toured the vineyards and tasted three very special Cabernet Sauvignons, certainly the most expensive wines I ever sipped. Each wine is made from the same type of grapes grown under the same conditions but on the three different types of soil found on the property, so the difference in taste should be due to the soil type.

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