



Mineralogical Society of America



web

www.minsocam.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



As I anticipate the transition to past-president, I will take this opportunity to offer some thoughts about this past year from my perspective as MSA president. A major priority was carrying forward the strategic planning process launched by last year's president Pamela Burnley. A committee of MSA members, staff, Councilors, and officers engaged in discussions that identified exciting initiatives to ensure the continued growth and structural strength of MSA and improve and expand its critical missions of supporting and promoting excellent scientific research in the mineral

sciences, as well as informing and engaging the public about the increasing strategic importance of minerals-related research to society. The draft plan will be discussed at this Fall's Council meetings and shared with members for additional comment and suggestions. Equally as important as the planning document itself is a commitment to making strategic planning an integral and ongoing part of MSA's governance.

As is commonly the case for such exercises, the process is as beneficial as the outcome. It was fascinating and gratifying to participate in far-ranging discussions about all aspects of MSA's structure and mission with numerous enthusiastic early and late-career members that are fully committed to making our society better. This broad involvement underscores a fundamental value of MSA membership—we can accomplish more working together than as individuals.

Inevitably, the strategic planning process included discussions about MSA's mission and goals, and, in fact, these topics were the focus of our first couple of meetings. Having recently celebrated our first 100 years, one might imagine that much has changed during that period in our science and world. Our website recounts that "MSA was founded in 1919 for the advancement of mineralogy, crystallography, geochemistry, petrology, and promotion of their uses in other sciences, industry, and the arts." Additionally, our mission indicates that MSA "encourages fundamental research about natural materials; supports the teaching of mineralogical concepts and procedures; and attempts to raise the scientific literacy of society with respect to issues involving mineralogy in the widest sense" Interestingly, the most animated discussions focused on the words "mineralogy" and "mineralogical" and echoed similar conversations that have been ongoing throughout much of my scientific career. What is it about "mineralogy" that inspires such controversy and passion? I have colleagues that wear the moniker proudly, perhaps even defiantly, pointing to its long and proud history as a science and the fundamental reality that minerals are the building blocks of the solid Earth and Solar System. Other colleagues and friends avoid the label at all costs, preferring titles such as petrologist, geochemist, or geomicrobiologist, etc. It is fair to say that much of this spirited debate reflects an expanded and healthy appreciation concerning the role of minerals in deciphering the intricacies of Earth and planetary processes, the necessary specializations demanded by increasingly sophisticated research opportunities, and, just perhaps, the need to rebrand as something new and different in our competitive research environment.

In the end, our strategic planning group suggested that a formal review of MSA's mission and goals be one of its recommended initiatives, but there was also a reaffirmation that, despite what we call ourselves as scientists, minerals are critical to all that we do, and that there is a common need and advantage to understanding them from myriad perspectives. There was also agreement among the planning group that, for historical and practical reasons, it is not an option to change the name of the society. In fact, I might argue that our name continues to be well suited for our science today, with "mineralogical" not as a label of who we are, but rather a recognition that using minerals in many and varied ways is fundamental to all of our work in the mineral sciences. So, whatever you call yourself as a researcher, if your work involves minerals, then you share much in common with MSA members, and as a society we are committed to helping you do your science and communicate it with your colleagues and the public.

Prior to beginning my official duties, like many I suspect, I tended to think of MSA as a thing—an organization, or society, that collected dues, gave out awards, published books and journals—most importantly *American Mineralogist*. It did not take long to see the obvious, which of course is that MSA accomplishes all of those things because of a small group of dedicated and skilled people. The elected Councilors and officers are essential for providing new creativity and vision and ensuring that the society sets and achieves appropriate and relevant goals. However, because this group rotates over time, the functional continuity and vitality of the society depends upon a few critical people, especially our current Executive Director, Ann Benbow, and our Managing Editor for *American Mineralogist*, Rachel Russell, and her colleagues. It has been impressive and enjoyable to learn from them and share in their enthusiasm for MSA. I am also grateful for the excellent group of editors, associate editors, and committee chairs that make it all work. After this past year, I am even more convinced that it is an exciting time for MSA and the ongoing work in the mineral sciences.

Jeffrey Post

2023 MSA President

NOTES FROM CHANTILLY

- MSA is delighted to announce the election of new Council members for 2024. They are:



PRESIDENT: Donna Whitney



VICE-PRESIDENT: Sarah Penniston-Dorland



COUNCILOR I: Elizabeth Johnson



COUNCILOR II: Razvan Caracas

Congratulations to the new members of MSA Council, and many thanks to all those who ran for Council. We also want to thank the MSA Members who voted! The new members will officially join Council at the First 2024 Meeting on Saturday, October 14, 2023 at the GSA Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA.

- **Renewal Season!** It is time to renew your memberships for 2024, as well as subscriptions to MSA's publications. Member dues are: Regular Members and Fellows (\$85); Early Career Members (\$45); Student Members (\$20); Senior Members (\$0); Sustaining Members (\$135—membership plus a \$150 contribution to support MSA's many activities). You can renew via the home page of MSA's website: www.msaweb.org. At that time, we hope that you will also make a contribution to one or more of MSA's funds. These funds support our student research grants, lecture series, websites, education and outreach activities, awards, and much more.

MINERALS DAY 2023

This annual event, which began in 2020 as part of Earth Science Week (American Geosciences Institute), was held on Monday, October 9, 2023. The theme this year is **Minerals: The Big Ideas**, and the focus is on the role of critical minerals in our lives. For the first time, MSA will be featuring an interactive poster on critical minerals. Clicking on the poster images will take visitors to pages of resources describing the critical minerals that make up each of the objects in the image.

EVENTS

Geological Society of America Annual Meeting

This conference took place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, from October 15 to 18, 2023. MSA held its Awards Luncheon there on Tuesday, October 17, as well as the Awards Lectures and a joint reception with the Gemological Institute of America that same day. There were also a number of MSA-sponsored presentations. For more information, please visit <https://community.geosociety.org/gsa2023/home>.

42nd FM-TGMS-MSA Tucson Mineral Symposium

The symposium is held in conjunction with the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show® (<https://www.tgms.org/show>), and will take place on Saturday, February 10, 2024. The symposium is co-sponsored by the Tucson Gem and Mineral Society, the Friends of Mineralogy, and the Mineralogical Society of America. The symposium theme is: "Pegmatites: Crystals Big & Beautiful." An audience of avocational and professional mineralogists and geologists is expected. Further details and the call for papers are on the Friends of Mineralogy website (<http://www.friendsofmineralogy.org>).


MINERALS DAY

[HOME](#)
[ABOUT](#)
[EVENTS](#)
[POSTERS](#)
[RESOURCES](#)
[PARTNERS](#)
[CONTACT](#)

MSA Celebrates Minerals Day

October 9, 2023



The Science of Minerals



The Value of Minerals



The Beauty of Minerals