



# Mineralogical Society of America

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### MSA: 90 Years Strong

December 2009 marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Mineralogical Society of America by 28 scientists at the 1919 Geological Society of America meeting in Boston. A number of those founding members had been discussing the idea of a mineralogy society for several years. They felt that mineralogy was underserved by the meetings and publications of the Geological Society of America. A letter sent to other mineralogists in 1917 by Edward H. Kraus, Frank R. Van Horn, Edgar T. Wherry, Alexander H. Phillips, Thomas L. Walker, and Herbert P. Whitlock summarized their motivation for a new organization: "The feeling has been growing that the founding of a Mineralogical Society would do much to stimulate greater interest in the subject and also give wider recognition to the work being done in this field in America ... Perhaps the greatest benefit to be derived would be the founding by the society of a journal to be devoted exclusively to the publishing of mineralogical papers. As is well known, there is great need for a dignified medium of publication for the increasing volume of mineralogical investigations which are being carried on in America" (Phair 1969). In his article on the founding of MSA, George Phair explains that not all recipients of that letter were enthusiastic about a new organization. Resistance to the formation of a mineralogy society included a sense that there were already too many societies, that there were too few mineralogists to support a society, and that mineralogy alone is too narrow a field to have its own society.

Ninety years later, we know that MSA was a good idea. Our membership today is around 2700. Our flagship journal, *American Mineralogist*, has indeed been a great benefit to the scientific community. From the beginning, MSA has had a broad mandate, not restricted to mineralogy. According to the MSA Bylaws, "The object of the Society shall be the advancement of mineralogy, crystallography, geochemistry, and petrology, and the promotion of their use in other sciences, industry, education, and the arts." The breadth of interests of our members continues to expand, and now includes fields such as biomineralogy and surface science and the application of tools such as ion microprobes and synchrotron radiation, not even imagined by our founders. Similarly, the variety and media of our publications have evolved with technology and the changing needs of our membership. MSA has proven to be a dynamic organization able to meet new challenges and take advantage of new opportunities in pursuit of its mission.

As MSA begins its tenth decade, we should continue to look for ways to advance and promote the science of our members. How can MSA improve what it does? Today there are many more societies, more meeting venues, and more journals available for mineralogical papers than at MSA's birth. What is the best role for MSA in this increasingly complex community? For example, one of the questions that concerned the first members was the nature of MSA's relationship with GSA. That question continues today with the formation of the new MVPG (mineralogy, volcanology, petrology, geochemistry) Division of GSA. What goals should guide our interactions with other societies? Are there actions that MSA should take that would "give wider recognition to the work being done" by our members? Are there new ways for MSA to take advantage of the ever-expanding digital world for scientific data management and access? Should MSA be proactive concerning important issues of our time that are informed by research in MSA disciplines? If you have answers to these questions or other ideas on ways to improve MSA, please share them with me or other society officers.

In his report on the first ten years of MSA, our first president, Edward H. Kraus (1930), gave a positive assessment and was "confident that the next decade will show equal or even greater accomplishments. This

will be readily possible if we maintain the same enthusiastic interest in the science and the splendid loyalty and spirit of co-operation that have been so marked since our organization." I share Kraus's confidence and look forward to your cooperation in making MSA's tenth decade even better than the ninth.

**John Brady** (jbrady@smith.edu)  
2010 MSA President

## REFERENCES

- Kraus E (1930) The first ten years of the Mineralogical Society of America. *American Mineralogist* 15: 98-103
- Phair G (1969) The founding of the Mineralogical Society of America. *American Mineralogist* 54: 1244-1255

## NOTES FROM CHANTILLY

- All 2008 and 2009 MSA members have been contacted by mail, electronically, or both about renewing their membership for 2010. If you have not renewed your MSA membership, please do so. If you have not received a notice by the time you read this, please contact the MSA business office. You can also renew online at anytime.
- Results of the 2009 election are as follows. The 2010 president of the Society is John B. Brady, and the 2010 vice president is David L. Bish. Mickey Gunter was reelected to another term as secretary, and Darrell J. Henry, treasurer, remains in office. The new councilors are Wendy A. Bohrsen and Sumit Chakraborty. They join continuing councilors Peter C. Burns, Carol D. Frost, Marc M. Hirschmann, and Penelope L. King.
- The Society welcomes the following exceptional students to the student award program's honor roll and wishes to thank the sponsors for enabling the Mineralogical Society of America to join in recognizing them. MSA's American Mineralogist Undergraduate (AMU) Award is for students who have shown an outstanding interest and ability in mineralogy, petrology, crystallography, and geochemistry. Each student is presented a certificate at an awards ceremony at his or her university or college and receives an MSA student membership, a Reviews in Mineralogy or Monograph volume chosen by the sponsor, student, or both.

Past AMU awardees are listed on the MSA website, as well as instructions on how MSA members can nominate their students for the award.

### **Ruth F. Aronoff**

Williams College

Sponsored by Prof. Reinhard Wobus

### **Ashley Anne Jordan**

Texas A & M University

Sponsored by Dr. Robert Popp

### **Matthew James Baum**

Indiana University

Sponsored by Prof. David Bish

### **Margaret E. Keogh**

University of Oregon

Sponsored by Dr. A. Dana Johnston

Congratulations to all the nominees!

- During its third meeting in 2009, MSA Council decided on the following awards. The 2010 Roebling Medalist is Robert C. Newton, University of California, Los Angeles. The 2011 Dana Medalist is Ross John Angel, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

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The 2010 MSA Awardee is Benjamin Gilbert, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. New Fellows in the Society are Thomas S. Duffy, David L. Kohlstedt, Sergey V. Krivovichev, Bruno Lanson, William F. McDonough, Peggy A. O'Day, Aral I. Okay, Terry Ann Plank, Mihály Pósfai, Nita Sahai, Renata M. Wentzcovitch, Richard Wirth, and Youxue Zhang.

- The recipients of the 2010 research grants in mineralogy and petrology, from MSA's Mineralogy/Petrology Research Fund, are Jessica Lynn Till, University of Minnesota, for her proposal titled "Rutherford Backscattering Spectrometry Studies of Fe Chemical Diffusion in Plagioclase," and Neil Robert Bennett, University of Toronto, for his project titled "The Metal-Silicate Partitioning Behavior of Re and Pt: Implications for Terrestrial Accretion and Core Formation".

- The recipient of the 2010 research grant in crystallography, from the Edward H. Kraus Crystallographic Research Fund, is Hsiu-Wen Wang, Indiana University Bloomington, for "Investigation of Phase Transition Mechanisms for NAT-Type Natural Zeolites, Natrolite, Mesolite and Scolecite."

**J. Alex Speer**, MSA Executive Director  
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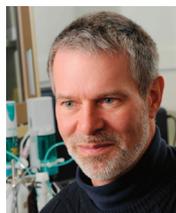
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## MSA AWARDS AT THE ANNUAL MEETING PORTLAND, OREGON



Dr. **ALEXANDRA NAVROTSKY**, University of California–Davis, received the 2009 **Roebbling Medal**, given for a lifetime of outstanding original research in mineralogy. She has developed and guided the field of thermodynamic mineralogy, obtaining data used to model the properties, structures, and stabilities of minerals and melts. This is especially important when the minerals occur in places or in ways or forms that we cannot sample or easily study directly, for example, minerals in silicate magma, minerals in the Earth's deep interior, and minerals occurring as nanoparticles or in biological materials.

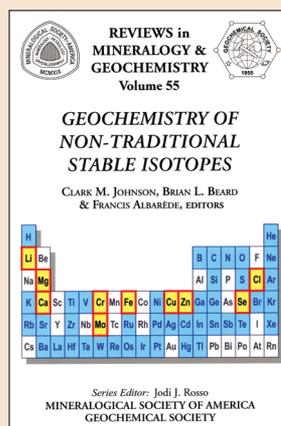


Dr. **ROBERT M. HAZEN**, Carnegie Institute of Washington, Washington, DC, is the 2009 **Distinguished Public Service Medalist**. The medal is awarded by the MSA Council to individuals who have made important contributions to furthering the vitality of the geological sciences. Dr. Hazen was cited for his journal publications, general-interest books, public lectures, appearances on radio and television, service to professional and governmental organizations, and teaching reforms.



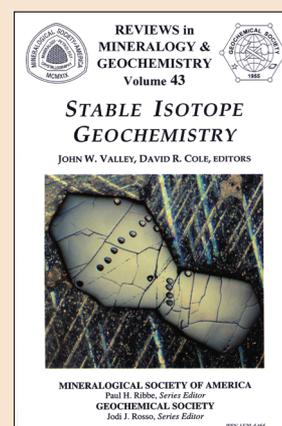
The **Mineralogical Society of America Award** is given for outstanding contributions by a scientist beginning his or her career. Dr. **THOMAS PATRICK TRAINOR**, University of Alaska Fairbanks, is the 2009 award recipient. He is recognized for his work on mineral surface geochemistry: determining the three-dimensional structures of mineral surfaces on which many chemical reactions in the environment occur. Such reactions include crystal growth and dissolution, incorporation of trace elements on minerals grown from aqueous solutions, and sorption reactions whereby mineral surfaces effectively grab and hold onto aqueous contaminants and pollutants.

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