

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Rock and mineral coatings, the thin and fascinating varnishes portrayed in this issue of *Elements*, are found in deserts, soils, sediment, oceans, Mars and on buildings or other manmade structures. They record the legacy of millions of years of ocean circulation, thousands of years of climate change, and tens of years of anthropogenic contaminant dispersal. Rock coatings teach us how life can both dissolve and form minerals and how it can survive some of the most extreme environmental conditions. Our early ancestors used petroglyphs carved into these coatings to depict hunting scenes, religious and cultural context, and to communicate geographical, and even astronomical, information. On every continent (except Antarctica), we can view some of our cultural heritage, preserved over thousands of years. Rock coatings have even been spotted on Mars by the NASA rovers *Spirit* and *Opportunity*.



Rock coatings at the Three Rivers Petroglyph Site (New Mexico, USA).
IMAGE CREDIT: CURTIS AND PEGGY MEKEMSONE

Geoscientists combine the latest analytical advances (transmission electron microscopes, synchrotron radiation methods, DNA, metal

stable isotopes) with well-established geo(bio)chemical methods to study the complex interface between rock or mineral surfaces and the environment. Through this approach geochemists can probe this enigmatic interface, revealing the beautiful and complex boundary between the lithosphere and the biosphere, atmosphere, and hydrosphere.

Rock and mineral coatings are more than stains on a rock face. They are archives of history waiting to be uncovered.

BREAKING NEWS: EDITOR 2018–2020



We are excited to announce that Jonathon (Jon) Blundy of the University of Bristol (UK) has accepted the invitation to join the *Elements* editorial team starting in January 2018 as our next petrology principal editor. He will replace Bernard (Bernie) Wood (University of Oxford, UK) whose term of office ends in December 2017. We will introduce Jon more formally at a later date.

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ELEMENTS AT GOLDSCHMIDT 2017



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Many of you know that *Elements* is an international magazine distributed to 16,000+ members located in more than 100 countries. But did you know that the *Elements* Executive Committee and editorial team reflect that international membership with committee members/editors from 10 countries and 3 continents? Our geographical distribution spans 16 time zones resulting in the bulk of our business being conducted by e-mail and conference calls. We also make a concerted effort to hold a face-to-face meeting each year. This year the Executive Committee and the editorial team will meet at the 27th Goldschmidt Conference in Paris, France (13–18 August 2017).

The *Elements* Executive Committee consists of representatives from the 17 participating societies ensuring that every society has representation in the operation of *Elements* and has an active voice in assuring its success. The committee oversees the long term strategy of *Elements* and its operating budget in addition to proposing and selecting new Principal Editors. If you have matters that you would like your society representative to bring to the table for discussion, please communicate with them soon because the annual face-to-face meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Sunday, 13 August 2017 at the Goldschmidt conference in Paris. Visit your society website or <http://elementsmagazine.org/about/executive-committee/> to connect with your society representative.

The *Elements* editorial team, consisting of three Principal Editors and the Executive Editor, is responsible for overseeing and editing the content of *Elements*. They will also hold their annual face-to-face meeting on Sunday, 13 August. This yearly meeting is extremely valuable as it gives our editorial team an opportunity to discuss in depth various aspects of publishing *Elements*. One of our main tasks is discussing the thematic proposals we have received for future issues of the magazine. If you haven't done so already, submit a thematic proposal for our consideration. More information about submitting a proposal can be found at <http://elementsmagazine.org/publish-in-elements/>.

Elements will also have a booth at the conference. Please drop by! This is an occasion for you to meet the Principal Editors, Executive Editor, and the Executive Committee. Invite your colleagues and/or students who do not currently receive *Elements* to visit the booth. We will have information available about our member societies and have back issues available for purchase.

We look forward to seeing you in Paris.

**Bernard J. Wood, Friedhelm von Blanckenburg,
Nancy L. Ross, and Jodi J. Rosso**

CALL FOR PROPOSALS – TOPICS FOR 2019

If you have an idea for a topic that could be included in the *Elements* lineup, please contact our editorial staff by 15 July 2017. The *Elements* editorial team will evaluate proposals for the 2019 lineup in early August prior to the Goldschmidt meeting in Paris (France).

Visit the "Publish in *Elements*" webpage for more information (<http://elementsmagazine.org/publish-in-elements/>).