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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

### Why Create a Society like MSA?



George Harlow

A short time ago Alex Speer, Executive Director of the Mineralogical Society of America (MSA), and I received a query from an undergraduate student interested in the mineral sciences from a country without a professional mineralogical society. He wanted to know how to go about starting such a society in his country. Alex took the lead on responding to him, and I thought the response and the subject was interesting enough to share. I then considered how MSA is doing in light of its original goals (I must admit to plagiarizing from Alex's response in this letter).

So how did MSA get started? Edward H. Kraus, Professor of Mineralogy at the University of Michigan (USA) and the MSA's "founder", first sent letters of inquiry to 51 likely members in North America to see if they would join or support a mineral society. He received 29 favorable replies and, in combination with a number of commitments made by people in-person, had a total of 40 interested people. With this, Kraus circulated a draft of bylaws and asked for comments. After the many comments had been received and the necessary changes made to the bylaws, he arranged an in-person organizational meeting whereat MSA was founded on 30 December 1919. Clearly, Kraus and his colleagues saw the need for an organization to facilitate formal and informal communication and networking within the mineralogical community.

Publishing is one way a society can fulfill its mission to a membership: it provides information to the society and an outlet for that membership. The *American Mineralogist*, the publication most identified with MSA, was actually started in 1916 by interested mineralogists and collectors from Philadelphia (The Philadelphia Mineralogical Society) and New York (the New York Mineralogical Club), and elsewhere, to make up for the loss of *The Collector* journal in 1909. Management of the *American Mineralogist* was taken over by MSA in 1920, fulfilling the commitment for formal communication by the nascent society. That tradition continued as one of the MSA's strongest suits, adding the *Reviews in Mineralogy* volumes in 1974, *Elements* in 2005 (replacing the newsletter *The Lattice* and a collaboration with other societies, of course), along with several monographs and special papers since 1962.

As the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America was the locale for the action to form MSA, it continues to be the convenient occasion for business meetings and sessions sponsored by the society. The MSA moved to sponsor sessions and activities at other society meetings, such as those by the American Geophysical Union (AGU) and the Goldschmidt Conferences. However, sponsoring its own meeting has not been favored for a variety of reasons, including costs that might compromise the more substantive publishing endeavors. The issue of a society meeting continues to be a concern for some members, and I would be interested to learn strong opinions on the subject. As has been announced, MSA will have a celebratory and reflective centennial meeting in the summer of 2019, where we hope the future of our science and the MSA itself will be one topic for discussion.

The MSA has expanded its role into education via workshops, short courses, and a textbook; and there is outreach via the lecture program, Minerals 4 Kids, booths at various meetings, and the list server *MSA-talk*. The MSA is, thus, fulfilling the activities that a professional society should perform. Nevertheless, MSA Council continues to look for ways to serve the membership better, as was presented in my last letter. We count on the membership for support of the society, to dedicate time

on committees and activities, and for dues and contributions to keep it financially healthy and able to address the membership's needs. Thus, as a society, I believe MSA fulfills its mission successfully but can always look for ways to improve, even at the ripe age of 98.

This is my fourth and final letter in *Elements* as MSA President. It has been an honor and privilege to serve MSA and ponder what to communicate in these missives. Please look forward to the next letter from Michael Brown, the incoming (or rising) president in the next issue.

**George Harlow**  
2017 MSA President

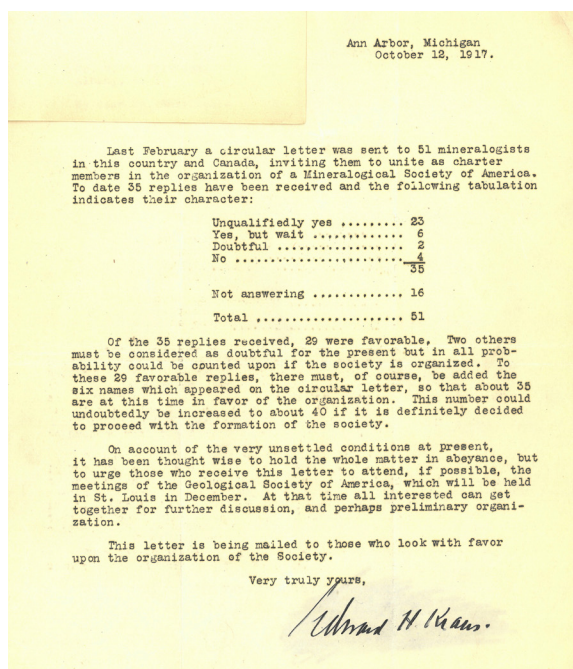
## NOTES FROM CHANTILLY

- 2017 election results** – the 2018 President of the MSA is Michael Brown, the Vice President is Mickey Gunter, and Past President is George Harlow. Bryan Chakoumakos was re-elected as Secretary. Thomas Duffy remains in office as Treasurer. New Councilors are Jay Ague and Donna Whitney, joining continuing councilors Rajdeep Dasgupta, Peter Nabelek, Sarah Carmichael, and Sarah C. Penniston-Dorland. Our outgoing councilors are Abby Kavner and Matthew J. (Matt) Kohn.
- Kraus Trust modified.** The Superior Court of the District of Columbia – Probate Division acted favorably to MSA's Petition to Modify the Edward H. Kraus Crystallographic Research Fund Trust. The petition asked for the removal of the 25–35 age restriction of persons to whom research grants of trust income may be made. The trust was modified 14 June 2017. This restriction has bedeviled MSA since the first grant. Based on the trust deed, correspondence, and council meeting minutes, Dr. Kraus' intent was to support young researchers beginning their careers in science. It is not clear whether this meant graduate students, beginning professionals, or both. The age range would suggest both today. However, in 1966 the 25–35 age could have more likely have meant a young working professional. Grants have been made to (PhD) graduate students and to beginning professionals. But the age range excluded many beginning students, and start-up funds needed by beginning faculty well exceed the amounts generated by the Kraus Fund, so there were never many applicants, a situation that will hopefully change by now removing the age restriction.
- MSA 2017 membership renewals** started in September with notices sent electronically. This will be followed by several electronic reminders before a paper copy is sent to those who do not renew online by the end of October. Members who renew and pay online before 31 October 2017 will receive a \$5 dues discount; the discount reflects cost savings to MSA from members who renew early online. There will be several electronic reminders before a paper copy is sent during November to those who do not renew online by the end of October.
- Members and Fellows who are in the senior, honorary, and life categories are sent renewal notices. They need not pay dues, but are sent notices as the best way to prompt an update of membership information, particularly mail and e-mail addresses.
- If you subscribe to other journals through MSA—*Gems & Gemology*, *Journal of Petrology*, *Mineral News*, *Physics and Chemistry of Minerals*, *Mineralogy and Petrology*, or *Rocks & Minerals*—please renew early. MSA needs to forward your renewal to those publishers before your subscription runs out.

**J. Alex Speer**  
jaspeer@minsocam.org

## MSA CENTENNIAL HISTORY

The February 2017 (v13n1) issue of *Elements* reproduced a typeset flyer calling for the organization of a Mineralogical Society of America. It was sent by Edward H. Kraus, a faculty member at the University of Michigan, to 51 mineralogists in the USA and Canada. The mimeographed letter reproduced here was sent by Dean Kraus in October 1917 as a follow-up, saying the formation of the organization would be put on hold because of “very unsettled conditions at present”. The “very unsettled conditions” were a result of the April 1917 entry of the United States into the First World War, a war that had been ongoing since July 1914. Plans to organize the society were restarted within a few months after the 11 November 1918 armistice and signing of the peace treaty in June 1919. The MSA was formed Tuesday, 20 December 1919, at the Copley Square Hotel, Boston (Massachusetts) during the meeting of the Geological Society of America.



## RESEARCH GRANTS

The Mineralogical Society of America  
2018 Grants for

### RESEARCH IN CRYSTALLOGRAPHY

from the Edward H. Kraus Crystallographic Research Fund  
with contributions from MSA membership and friends

### STUDENT RESEARCH IN MINERALOGY AND PETROLOGY

from an endowment created by MSA members



Selection is based on the qualifications of the applicant; the quality, innovativeness, and scientific significance of the proposed research; and the likelihood of success of the project. There will be up to three US\$5,000 grants, with the restriction that the money be used in support of research.

Application instructions and online submission are available on the MSA website, <http://www.minsocam.org>. Completed applications must be submitted by 1 March 2018.

## AWARD NOMINATIONS

### Nominations Sought for 2019 Awards

Nominations must be received by 1 June 2018

The **Roebling Medal** (2019) is MSA's highest award and is given for eminence as represented by outstanding published original research in mineralogy.

The **Dana Medal** (2019) recognizes continued outstanding scientific contributions through original research in the mineralogical sciences by an individual in the middle of their career.

**Mineralogical Society of America Award** (2019) is given for outstanding published contribution(s) prior to 35<sup>th</sup> birthday or within 7 years of the PhD.

The **Distinguished Public Service Medal** (2019) is presented to an individual who has provided outstanding contributions to public policy and awareness about mineralogical topics through science.

**Society Fellowship** is the recognition of a member's significant scientific contributions. Nomination is undertaken by one member, with two members acting as cosponsors. Form required, contact committee chair or MSA home page.

Submission requirements and procedures are on MSA's home page:  
<http://www.minsocam.org/>

## NEW PUBLICATION

### Care and Documentation of Mineral Collections

Jean F. DeMouthe

i-vi + 94 pages. ISBN 978-0-939950-99-7

This work is an attempt to provide information and guidance on all aspects of caring for and documenting mineral collections. It is aimed at professionals and amateurs alike and is dedicated to everyone who shares a love of minerals and those who care for and about collections. Chapters include: “Collection Organization”, “Documentation”, “Ancillary Collections”, “Preventive Conservation”, “Collection Organization”, “Storage”, “Hazards, Safety, and Risks”, “Administrative Policies”, “Private Collections”, and “Bibliography and Resources”.

Description and ordering online  
at [www.minsocam.org](http://www.minsocam.org) or contact  
Mineralogical Society of America,  
3635 Concorde Pkwy Ste 500,  
Chantilly, VA 20151-1110 USA  
phone: +1 (703) 652-9950 fax: +1  
(703) 652-9951 e-mail: [business@minsocam.org](mailto:business@minsocam.org)  
Cost is \$45 (\$33.75 members MSA, GS, CMS).

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