



Mineralogical Society of America

www.minsocam.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Open Access Journals – For Whom?



John Brady

In December 2009, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy organized an online public forum to discuss public access to data and publications that are based on federally funded research. According to the announcement in the Federal Register, "The administration is dedicated to maximizing the return on Federal investments in R&D." Such US government backing, in addition to that of several European governments and funding organizations, will give new momentum to

the movement for "open access" journals, that is, journals that are freely available to all readers. Various advocates, from individuals to universities, have supported open access to published papers since the establishment of the Internet, and many commented favorably about the idea on the White House blog. With the steady rise of subscription prices, both for libraries and for individuals, open access to journals sounds very appealing. But the likely consequences of a comprehensive open access policy may not be what the advocates imagine or have emphasized.

There are many good arguments for open access journals. Papers that are published in an open access journal can be read without charge by anyone with Internet access. Scholars, students, and others whose libraries might not be able to afford important journals can, nevertheless, read open access articles. Perhaps open access papers would, therefore, be more widely read and cited. If research is funded with public grant money, it seems unreasonable that a private journal publisher should profit from that research. Universities, too, provide support for faculty and student research. Shouldn't the university be able to guarantee that its students, alumni, and other constituents have unlimited access to the papers published by its faculty? And if papers can be published online with no cost for printing, paper, and postage, shouldn't online journals be free?

Although I would like every interested person to be able to read *American Mineralogist* and *Elements* papers online, the reality of open access publishing has a number of serious drawbacks. Most respected scientific journals are expensive to produce, whether published by a nonprofit society like MSA or by a for-profit publisher. For *American Mineralogist*, the current cost is about \$250 per page. Why should it cost so much when the author prepares the text and figures, and when peer-review is done by volunteers? Part of the reason is that there is considerable management and editing needed to get a paper from submission to final professional form, beyond the excellent work done by our editors, associate editors, and reviewers. *American Mineralogist* has a staff of two and employs freelance help, which means an office, salaries, benefits, etc. There are expenses for manuscript tracking, copyediting, page layout, printing, mailing, computers, supplies, Internet service, online posting, subscription management, archiving, storage, accounting, audits, and more. Some of these costs, perhaps 20%, could disappear if there were no paper copies of the journal printed and there were no subscriptions. But most would not. Currently, subscriptions to *American Mineralogist* by libraries and individuals, along with a growing income from online access through GeoscienceWorld (GSW), cover the bulk of these expenses. Authors who can pay also contribute through their voluntary payment of the \$75 page-charge fee, offprint orders, and charges for printing in color. These author contributions offset expenses that otherwise would need to be supported by subscriptions. As a non-

profit publisher, with a primary goal of advancing research in mineralogy, crystallography, geochemistry, and petrology, MSA has always valued keeping subscriber costs down.

If *American Mineralogist* and other journals were open access, there would be no subscription income, and other sources of income would be needed to pay each journal's expenses. The most commonly mentioned alternative is for authors to pay the entire cost of publication. Those authors with sufficient funds to pay the estimated \$250 per page fee would be able to publish in *American Mineralogist*. However, those authors who today can publish for free in *American Mineralogist* would have to find another publisher if they were not able to pay. Open access would be "open" only for the readers, not for the authors. Those with money would be able to publish. Those without money would not be able to publish. Alternatively, MSA could increase dues to about \$350 per member to make *American Mineralogist* free to authors and to readers, or hope for that never-identified alternative source of support often alluded to by open access supporters.

It is already possible to publish articles in *American Mineralogist* that are freely available to all readers online, and several authors have chosen that route. To do so, the authors must pay the current full cost of publication (\$250 per page). That makes *American Mineralogist* what some have termed a "hybrid journal." Other hybrid journals can be found with open access fees ranging from \$800 to \$3000 per article. I urge those who have grant or university funds to pay for open access to do so. Open access fees, as with the voluntary author page charges and the income from GSW, would be used to keep subscription rates affordable. But if you value top scientific journals, like *American Mineralogist*, and if you value peer review, careful editing, consistency, and professional production, don't insist that all papers be open access without offering a realistic source of support. Our current, nonprofit business model works well—paying the bills with reasonable subscription charges and author payments. Open access would end *American Mineralogist* as we know it. Let's keep our journal and keep it great.

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

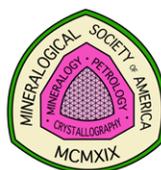
The Mineralogical Society of America 2011 Grants for

Research in Crystallography

from the Edward H. Kraus Crystallographic Research Fund with contributions from MSA members 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 research as outlined in a written proposal; and the likelihood of success of the project. There are three US\$5,000 grants, with no restrictions on how the funds may be spent as long as they are 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 June 1, 2010.

IN MEMORIAM

DONALD T. HOFF (Member – 1968)

NOTES FROM CHANTILLY

- MSA will use electronic balloting for the 2010 election of MSA officers and councilors. The candidates are – President: David L. Bish; Vice President: George E. Harlow and Michael F. Hochella Jr.; Treasurer: Darrell Henry (runs unopposed for a second term); Councilors (two to be selected): Jay J. Ague, Pamela C. Burnley, Guy L. Hovis, and Kevin M. Rosso. Mickey Gunter continues in office as Secretary. Continuing as councilors are Penelope L. King, Marc M. Hirschmann, Wendy A. Bohrsen, and Sumit Chakraborty.

MSA members will be sent a message to their current e-mail address with voting instructions in April. Make sure MSA has your most recent e-mail address! Those who do not wish to vote online can request a paper ballot from the MSA business office. As always, the voting deadline is August 1. Individuals elected to office decide on the direction of the Society. Voting is an important responsibility for all MSA members.

- MSA benefits from the labors of many volunteers. At the annual meeting, MSA recognized the contributions of Connie J. Manson, Olympia, WA, former geology librarian at the Washington Division of Natural Resources and president of the Geoscience Information Society. Connie exhaustively examined the archive of the *American Mineralogist* on the MSA website with two goals in mind: (1) She identified the references in GeoRef for the entire run of the *American Mineralogist* from 1916 to the present and provided information on possible additions, corrections, and links. (2) She checked the links in the tables of contents on the MSA website and compared the contents to the actual pdfs. Her work has resulted in thousands of live full-text links to the *American Mineralogist* archive being added to GeoRef. In addition, significant improvements in the quality of both the existing GeoRef references and the tables of contents links were made possible. This Herculean task was begun in March 2008 and ended in February 2009. Her efforts help to make the *American Mineralogist* more accessible to users—both web-surfers and GeoRef searchers alike—and MSA very much appreciates her efforts.
- If you or your institution has an aggressive spam blocker and you have not been getting the few announcements from MSA about new issues of the *American Mineralogist* online, voting, your renewal, or confirmation of your online orders, you may wish to see about allowing such messages to reach you. Otherwise, you will need to keep watch on the MSA website for them.

J. Alex Speer, (jaspeer@minsocam.org)
MSA Executive Director

50- AND 25-YEAR MSA MEMBERS

The following individuals will reach 50 or 25 years of continuous membership in the Mineralogical Society of America during 2010. The MSA shows its appreciation for their long support of the Society by publishing their names in this list and by presenting them with 25- or 50-year pins, which are mailed in early January. If you should be on this list and are not, or have not received your pin, please contact the MSA business office.

50-Year Members

Daniel S. Barker
Petr Černý
Gail E. Dunning
Robert L. Freed
Seymour Geller
Richard P. Hight
Wallace D. Kleck
William F. Moll Jr.
Duane M. Moore
Bruce W. Nelson
Donald C. Noble
Norman J. Page
Peter Robinson
Della M. Roy
William R. Smith
Leendert Van Der Plas
Hans Wondratschek

25-Year Members

Paul M. Ashley
Charles R. Bacon
W. Robert Baragar
Craig R. Bina
Georges Calas
Sumit Chakraborty
Jeremy S. Delaney
Denton S. Ebel

Eleanor W. Faller
Michael Gregorkiewitz Sr.
George R. Helffrich
Yoshikuni Hiroi
Hiroshi Isobe
Prof. Olivier Jaoul
Raymond Jeanloz
Werner H. Joswig
Victor C. Kress
Rebecca A. Lange
James K. W. Lee
Robert C. Liebermann
Marcello Mellini
John M. Neil
Brian L. Phillips
Lee S. Potter
Jonathan G. Price
Juliet C. Reed
Stjepan Scavnicar
Hans-Peter Schertl
Renate Schumacher
Eric Seedorff
Norimasa Shimobayashi
R. Chris Tacker
Julie K. Vry
Mark David Welch
Timothy J. White
Yoshiaki Yamaguchi

PACROFI X 2010

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

June 7–10

on the University of Nevada, Las Vegas campus

Information and registration at
<http://geoscience.unlv.edu/PACROFI2010.html>

INVITATION TO REQUEST A 2010–2011 MSA DISTINGUISHED LECTURER

The Mineralogical Society of America is again offering a lecture program for the 2010–2011 academic year, with the arrangement that the MSA will pay travel expenses of the lecturers, and the host institutions will be responsible for local expenses, including accommodation and meals. The program will include three lecturers, one of whom resides in Europe. Depending on the response, one or more lecture tours will be arranged outside North America.

Names of the 2010–2011 Distinguished Lecturers and their lecture titles are not yet available, but will be posted soon on the MSA website. If your institution is interested in requesting the visit of an MSA Distinguished Lecturer, check the website for lecturers and titles, and e-mail your request to the Lecture Program Administrator: Prof. Steven R. Dunn, Dept. of Geology & Geography, Mount Holyoke College, 50 College S, South Hadley, MA 01075-6419, USA; e-mail: sdunn@mtholyoke.edu; tel.: +1 (413) 538-2531; fax: +1 (413) 538-2239. The Lecturer program is designed to run from September 2010, through

April 2011. Lecturer requests received by May 12, 2010, will be given priority. Late applications will be considered on a space-available basis. In making your request please include (1) airport proximity and travel time to your institution, (2) the name of a contact person at your institution for the months of May and June (when schedules will be assembled), (3) contact e-mail addresses and phone numbers, (4) flexibility on Lecturer preference, and (5) for schools outside the U.S. the starting and ending dates of your academic terms. Because of travel and schedule constraints, it is normally not possible to satisfy requests for tightly constrained dates such as seminar days.



VOTE

2010 MSA ELECTIONS