



Geochemical Society

www.geochemsoc.org

THINKING ABOUT THE PAST AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



At a recent meeting of the Council of Scientific Society Presidents, Shirley Sagawa, a visiting fellow at the Center for American Progress and coauthor of the book *The Charismatic Organization*, stressed the importance of maintaining an organization's vitality by periodically reexamining its goals and objectives. She argued that a useful starting point is to take a look at a society's mission statement. The Geochemical Society's mission statement, drafted in 1955, reads:

The Geochemical Society is a nonprofit scientific society founded to encourage the application of chemistry to the solution of geological and cosmological problems.

Our founders produced this statement at a time when there was dramatically less scientific understanding of the Earth and its place in the universe than there is today. A number of things have changed to expand our cultural and scientific perspectives since that early vision of geochemistry. The iconic view, returned from Apollo 8, of "earthrise" over the moon was certainly a cultural benchmark. That image put the place of our planet in the cosmos into a different and more humbling perspective for both scientist and nonscientist alike. Over the intervening years, the entire Earth science enterprise has become increasingly sophisticated. We now have tools capable of characterizing natural processes ranging in scale from microscopic and even molecular to planetary. We have space probes sending back data on our solar system and instrumentation giving us insights into the origin of the universe. With this expanded understanding has come an increased appreciation of the complexity of the natural processes we are studying. Steffen et al. (2005) put it this way: "The earth behaves as a system in which oceans, atmosphere and land, and the living and non-living parts therein, are all connected." Or, as John Muir, one of America's leading early conservationists, said, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." Given the remarkable transformation of the field of geochemistry, it is evident that we are doing far more than applying "chemistry to the solution of geological and cosmological problems." Instead, geochemists are key players in some truly challenging issues facing humanity, issues that are driven by our exploding population numbers, technological advances, and the resulting impact on the planet. So, we perhaps need to rethink our mission (and mission statement) to reflect these new realities and adopt a vision that embraces an expanded role for the Society.

Recognizing these realities, the Society has been working to foster the science of geochemistry and continue to provide value to members. Our most important activity is publishing the benchmark journal in the field, *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta*. Through the prodigious efforts of the editor, Frank Podosek, this journal continues its steady increase in importance and impact. The Society's second major activity, conducted in close collaboration with our partner, the European Association for Geochemistry, is the Goldschmidt Conference. This conference is the premier international forum for communication of geochemical research. We have taken concrete steps to assure that the Goldschmidt Conference retains its status as the leading international geochemical meeting by contracting with a professional meeting-planning organization to handle operational details of North American meetings, thus allowing organizers to focus almost totally on the international scientific program. We have recently joined the American Geological Institute to add our voice to 45 other organizations on subjects of broad Earth science significance. Our financial affairs are now in the hands of professional financial planners. The goal is to be able to grow our funds for use in new initiatives, such as outreach to scientists from economically disadvantaged countries. Currently, we are

investigating the possibility of webcasting portions of the Knoxville Goldschmidt Conference to Africa. We are also committed to increasing the diversity of our awardees and officers and engaging the young scientists entering the field.

Our existing strengths and expanding directions represent an evolution that is a continuation of the efforts of several extremely talented and energetic past presidents. I would personally like to thank Judy McKenzie, Tim Drever, and especially Sue Brantley for serving as my mentors, and I profoundly thank our many volunteer officers and committee members who make the operation of the Society possible. Last, I wish Sam Mukasa well as he assumes the leadership of the Geochemical Society. He brings a vision and perspective to the helm that will serve us well. See you all at the Knoxville Goldschmidt.

Marty Goldhaber, GS President 2007–2009

REFERENCE

Steffen W, Sanderson A, Tyson PD, Jager J, Matson PA, Moore B III, Oldfield F, Richardson K, Schellnhuber HB, Turner BI, Wasson RJ (2005) *Global Change and the Earth System – A Planet under Pressure*. Springer-Verlag, New York, 356 pp

GS AT GSA-PORTLAND MEETING



Theodore Flynn, Geochemical Society student member from the University of Illinois, Urbana, was the first to see our message on Facebook and come by the GS booth to pick up a free Geochemical Society T-shirt.



The 2009 F. Earl Ingerson Lecturer, W. Berry Lyons (left), stands with GS president, Marty Goldhaber.

2010 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Thank you for your membership and support in 2009. If you have not already renewed for 2010, please take a moment now to renew (www.geochemsoc.org). If you have already renewed, thank you for your continuing support! 2010 membership is only \$30 (US) for professionals and \$10 (US) for students.

GOLDSCHMIDT 2010

Earth, Energy, and the Environment

June 13–18
Knoxville, Tennessee

Goldschmidt 2010 features an exciting scientific program with twenty themes and special sessions

- *Planetary Evolution and Astrobiology*
- *Evolution of the Early Earth*
- *Deep-Earth Processes: Core and Mantle*
- *Physics and Chemistry of Earth Materials*
- *Evolution of Oceanic Crust and its Hydrothermal Systems*
- *Continental Crustal Processes*
- *Magma Generation, Volcanism and Ore Formation*
- *Metamorphism over Multiple Length and Time Scales*
- *Geochemistry of Energy Systems*
- *Global Element Cycles and Climate Change*
- *Oceans and Atmospheres*
- *Reconstruction of Paleoclimate*
- *Hydrogeochemistry of Surface Earth Processes*
- *Weathering Processes*
- *Mineral–Microbe Interactions*
- *Frontiers in Biogeochemistry*
- *Nano-Geo and -Environmental Science: A New Frontier*
- *Atomistic and Molecular Modeling of Geochemical Processes*
- *Application of X-ray and Neutron Methods to Geochemistry*
- *Analytical and Experimental Techniques*
- *Special Sessions*

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Registration and abstract submission
opens January 1, 2010
Abstract deadline is February 21, 2010

www.goldschmidt2010.org