

## From the Editors

### The case for a great many planetary science journals with broad diffuse subject boundaries

Arguably the most successful editor of scientific journals in recent times is Sir John Maddox, the editor of *Nature* who announced his retirement earlier this year. Having steered the journal through so many storms, both scientific and non-scientific, to maintain *Nature's* preeminence among science journals, Maddox paused to consider the "Case for a Great Many Journals" in his May 4th editorial. He did so with remarkable eloquence and using the simplest argument possible. He leafed through a few journals on his desk and described one or two of the papers in each of them. What better argument for a great many journals is there than that they all contain interesting research? Planetary science, with its diffuse tentacles into cosmochemistry, astrophysics and geology, is also blessed with a great many journals, and sure enough it has been said that maybe it has too many.

I have not had a chance to apply the Maddox test to our planetary science journals, although I am sure that they would all pass muster. But during the production of the abstract issue of *Meteoritics* each year, I do have a chance to enjoy and appreciate a wide sampling of the research produced by our community. There is certainly a feast here—one with great diversity.

There are abstracts in the present issue on the internal geochemistry of the Earth; on possible climatic effects of a comet impact; and, remote sensing of asteroids Gaspra, Ida, and its satellite Dactyl, and Eros. There are several abstracts estimating surface conditions on asteroids and several papers dealing with stellar evolution and nucleosynthesis. The topics are a true smorgasbord of research on extraterrestrial topics.

There are also a great many abstracts discussing the connections between meteorites and asteroids, and the long-standing problem of the mismatch between the meteorite classes and asteroid spectral reflectivity classes. Included among them are abstracts expressing caution in the ways in which misinterpretations of meteorite data may mislead asteroid astronomers. But this caution is applicable to any of the fields adjacent to meteorite

studies (e.g., astrophysical attempts to reconcile nebular models with meteorite data). It is still early in our efforts to integrate meteorite research into the wider fields of planetary astronomy and astrophysics, and it is a difficult process. Clearly, in trying to understand the Solar System, it is essential that we consider all the information and materials available to us. However, all too often meteorite research is presented to adjacent communities without sufficient caution as to the strengths and the weaknesses of the conclusions. A good example is the nebular origin of chondrites, a recent idea that may or may not stand the test of time. Another concerns the biases in the earth's meteorite collection, biases which are introduced by the vagaries of unstable orbits and passage through a hostile terrestrial atmosphere. The one sure way to combat this problem is to keep our focus broad and the subject boundaries diffuse. In light of this, the growing interactions between communities is to be applauded even if they are imperfect. The editorial board of *Meteoritics* hopes that the final fruits of these abstracts—duly nourished and brought to full maturity following the meeting—will find their final home in our journal. This would be of great value to the journal but also to progress in a field we all love.

This issue was edited and formatted by the publications department of the Lunar and Planetary Institute in Houston, a daunting task that they accomplish each year with remarkable speed and precision. Part of the reason for their success is the equally remarkable cooperation of the authors. It always surprises me that there are so few problem abstracts, but the few exceptions do take considerable time and anguish to handle. Joyce Roth and Gail Halleck in the *Meteoritics* office perform the final preparations and organize the whole enterprise. Coordination and cooperation between Houston, Texas; Fayetteville, Arkansas; Lawrence, Kansas (where Allen Press, our printer, is located); and the local organizers is crucial to the entire enterprise and is a joy to watch. My thanks, on behalf of our research community, to them all.

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effective immediately