Meteoritics & Planetary Science 35, 1125–1126 (2000)

From the Editors

Meteoritics and Planetary Science for 2001

Going Monthly

The Society's main journal, *Meteoritics and Planetary Science,* will go to monthly publication next year, thus consolidating its position as one of the premier journals for publishing planetary research. A great many members of our community—the Society's officers and councilors, the journal's Associate Editors, authors and reviewers—have worked hard to build up the journal over the last decade. When this decision to go monthly was made it was a tribute to all their efforts and a statement of confidence in the future.

How Not to Gouge the Community

Meteoritics and Planetary Science is almost unique among planetary science journals in that it is owned by the people who write, review and read the journal. It is not owned by one of the commercial publishers who has, for many years, gouged our community. The cost of journal subscriptions to libraries is horrendous, and the profit margin being made by the for-profit publishers is among the largest in the commercial world. One expert on scientific publication recently referred to the situation as intrinsically unstable. We are very proud that *Meteoritics & Planetary Science* is non-profit, and run by colleagues. Our libraries pay the actual costs of the journal. No publishing executives or share-holders grow fortunes on the backs of *Meteoritics & Planetary Science's* authors, reviewers and editors.

A New *Meteoritics and Planetary Science*

The Editorial Office of *Meteoritics & Planetary Science* will make good use of the opportunities going monthly presents for nurturing the journal and for better serving the community that owns the journal. We have come a long way since its foundation in 1953 (1938 if you include the journal's precursors). *Meteoritics & Planetary Science* is about to take a very large next step, but there are several other exciting improvements we will make at this time.

Web-based Submission, Review, and Tracking of articles– First, starting in January 2001, *Meteoritics & Planetary Science* will offer web-based submission, review and tracking of papers, employing simple user-friendly procedures. *Meteoritics & Planetary Science* already has the shortest processing times for papers in the field. These procedures, together with the change to monthly publication, will reduce processing times even more. We currently aim to publish 75% of papers within eight months of submission, and this time will now be reduced to six months.

The Appearance of the Journal–Second, a great many changes will be made to the journal to make it easier to read. The font size will be increased, figures will be larger, layout will be simplified and the paper quality will be improved to enable better reproduction of figures. New methods of figure reproduction will be used. We estimate that the modest increase in material costs will be offset by the savings caused by simpler formatting.

Prelude*: A New Service to Authors and Readers of *Meteoritics and Planetary Science–Third, the Associate Editors of *Meteoritics and Planetary Science* are currently discussing a new service for the readers and authors of our journal called *Prelude.* The service will be a pioneering use of the internet for scientific publication and it will cut several months off the production times of papers published in *Meteoritics and Planetary Science.* It will be a means of improving scientific discussion between scientists that is sure to be quickly emulated by other journals in the field.

ScienceMAPS*: Another New Service to Authors and Readers of *Meteoritics and Planetary Science–Fourth, starting in 2001, readers of *Meteoritics and Planetary Science* will be able to receive e-mail announcements of the Table of Contents for upcoming issues of the journal.

New Associate Editors for Asteroids and Comets–Fifth, and probably the most important change, we plan to appoint six new Associate Editors interested in asteroid and comet research. This is an exciting time for our journal, but it is an even greater time for our field. Not since Chladni and Howard convinced the scientific community that rocks actually fell from space have the opportunities been so great. Meteorites afford unique opportunities for new insights into the nature and history of the Moon and Mars, and the primitive stuff of the solar system and its precursor materials. History was contrary with the lunar samples, in that missions brought samples to Earth before we realized that Nature had. For the Mars and asteroidal meteorites sample return missions are hovering on the horizon, two hundred years after the meteorites first entered our laboratories. Our understanding of the cosmos around us, and of what meteorites have been trying to tell us for two centuries, will advance in leaps and bounds when we have sample returns from Mars, comets, asteroids and even the solar wind. The Meteoritical Society and *Meteoritics & Planetary Science* are uniquely placed to be at the spear-point of that exploding understanding. For this reason, it is essential that the Editorial Board of *Meteoritics & Planetary Science*, which is also its team of Associate Editors, is ready to meet the subject as it continues to evolve from "meteoritics" to "meteoritics and planetary science".

Afterthought

I am grateful to Council, for supporting my great many pleas for change in *Meteoritics & Planetary Science* and for so thoughtfully responding to my reports, to a team of associate editors I have come to regard as respected friends rather than colleagues, to our crucial but under-appreciated reviewers, and to an office staff that works so diligently. Most of all I am grateful to our authors, who continue to trust us with their work. Being a very small piece of presenting their work to their community of peers is something I greatly value and find extremely rewarding.

Derek Sears
Editor