

EDITORIAL: AN ELECTRONIC VERSION OF
THE CANADIAN MINERALOGIST

I am happy to announce that beginning with the next issue, Volume **38**, we will be producing both an electronic version and a paper version of *The Canadian Mineralogist*. In so doing, the Mineralogical Association of Canada has taken a proactive stand in view of irreversible changes that are taking place in the field of scholarly publications. For us, this is another adventure into unknown territory. Fortunately, in view of limited financial resources and staff, others have been there, made the inevitable mistakes, and are now in a position to help us make the transition in a smooth and seamless way, with a minimum of delay.

The decision to produce an electronic version came in response to inquiries concerning the availability of our journal on the WEB, and the cost of site licenses. These inquiries came from organizations that are interested in having *The Canadian Mineralogist* available at the terminal of every staff member. We are, of course, drawn into this area of activity by the availability on the WEB of scholarly journals produced by profit-driven publishers. We thus anticipate that by going on the WEB, the sphere of influence of our journal will broaden considerably.

To a university library, *The Canadian Mineralogist* costs a small fraction of the cost of most journals in the Earth Sciences. In my opinion, the quality of the journal we publish is first-rate, and the journal is very highly regarded internationally. In spite of this admittedly biased assessment, libraries in some academic institutions, for example the one at McGill University, where I work, are faced with such a serious financial crunch that just about every scholarly journal is getting cut, at least those in the area of the Earth Sciences. In the current context, money is available for site licences to electronically produced journals and for books, and that's about all. Thus next year, the paper version of *The Canadian Mineralogist* will be cut, such that our decision to publish an electronic version is very timely. The librarians have adopted the tacit stand that if a journal is any good, then by definition it is available on the WEB. We have been placed in a sink-or-swim situation, and we intend to swim!

The Mineralogical Association of Canada will continue to produce a paper version of *The Canadian Mineralogist*. We have signed a contractual agreement with NRC Research Press to produce the electronic version; articles will be available in PDF format. NRC Research Press is part of the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI). It publishes fourteen journals, all of them in paper and electronic versions. The one you are likely to know best is the *Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences*. NRC Research Press will work with us to produce a quality product according to the protocols that they have developed for their own journals. Part of their mandate is to remain at the forefront of Canadian scientific publishing. Thus a significant investment has been made to develop electronic publishing capabilities. Another part of their mandate is to share this practical knowledge with small non-profit societies like ours, to allow them to participate in the explosion of WEB-based resources. Interestingly for the MAC, NRC Research Press already has well-established contacts with subscription agents and other suppliers of electronic information. For all practical purposes, the contents of *The Canadian Mineralogist* will be offered to these middle men as if our journal had become the fifteenth NRC

journal.

For the first year of operation at least, WEB access to *The Canadian Mineralogist* will be free to personal subscribers. The MAC will work closely with NRC Research Press concerning the sales of corporate electronic subscriptions and site licenses according to an equitable fee structure. More details will be forthcoming in the MAC Newsletter and in forthcoming issues of this journal. I applaud the decisions of the Executive Council of the Mineralogical Association of Canada to promote *The Canadian Mineralogist*, first to expand the journal from four to six issues per year, then to cover entirely the extra costs of publishing in color, and now to reach out to new (and existing) audiences *via* our WEB site, www.mineralogicalassociation.ca/.

Robert F. Martin