

MetSoc Historical Metallurgy Standing Committee

Marvellous Metals Magazine

Project Story

The idea for the publication was first introduced in April 2019 following a suggestion from Prof. Erin Bobicki, then Chair of the Historical Metallurgy Standing Committee (HMSC). Erin's thoughts were, *"Our publications have traditionally been appealing to mature people. We should plan to create some comic books to tell the stories of historical metallurgy to a younger audience in a fun way!"*

The idea became an agenda item at the HMSC meetings and the discussion continued to create a comic book featuring famous figures from Canada's rich mining history. HMSC members Dr. Rebecca Dolgoy¹ and Monica Nasmyth supported the suggestion by providing examples of comics and contacting the National Film Board. Monica initiated a vision statement for the project, and other HMSC members, including Dr. Chris Twigge-Molecey, Dr. Sam Marcuson, and Engin Ozberk, contributed to its further development. Further contacts were made with comic magazine and book publishers, and meetings were arranged with graphic artists. The HMSC members learned that preparing such a magazine or book—including the artwork, publication, printing, and distribution—would require significant funding.

Prof. Erin Bobicki stepped down as Chair in August 2021. In November 2021, Engin became Chair of the HMSC and reactivated the Comic Project, as it was then called. He initiated regular HMSC meetings, where the comic project was discussed on an ongoing basis.

In an email dated February 7, 2022, Monica further articulated the idea: *"The idea came from one of my sons. I told him about our Historical Metallurgy Comic initiative. He immediately responded with how much his 10-year-old looks forward to receiving his quarterly Kayak magazine in the mail. It is published by Canada's History Society and always contains a section in comic or graphic novel format. My son said the comic style is well suited to the target age group of 7- to 14-year-olds, but that he enjoys reading them too. He suggested, why not partner with Canada's History Society's Kayak group? An issue could be dedicated to Canada's metallurgical triumphs and the people involved, including the role of CIM/MetSoc."*

Monica then suggested: *“This might be a great way to share knowledge of Canadian mining history of mining, metallurgy and materials sector with people of all ages. After all, the 7- to 14-year-old is the focus not only of older siblings and parents, but also of grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts and uncles, teachers, and friends. Think bedtime stories, Skype calls, Zoom calls, FaceTime, and similar conversations. A single issue that a youngster enjoys can end up disseminating knowledge to a much larger group. The return on investment could be quite large. If you look through past issues of Kayak, you will see several issues dedicated to Canadian medical accomplishments. Many other subjects have also been covered. The one my son showed me included the history of Canadian Red Cross swimming lessons.*

The prize for us would be to implant in young minds the idea that mining and metallurgy are exciting parts of our Canadian identity, and to channel that knowledge and excitement through the child to the wider group whose focal point is the child.”

To pursue this idea, a core project team was formed. Monica, Rebecca, Sam, and William volunteered to join the Core Team, and the first meeting was held on April 12, 2022. Monica contacted the publisher, Canada’s History Society, in May 2022 and was given the contact information for the *Kayak* editor, Nancy Payne.

The project idea was developed further through hundreds of emails and dozens of virtual meetings. The team exchanged ideas and carried out research into historical events, biographies, corporate histories, Canadian technologies, inventions, and success stories. A table of contents was drafted, and the project vision was updated several times. The project idea was presented to the MetSoc Past Presidents at a virtual meeting in July 2022.

Dr. Eric Weidenhammer joined the Project Core Team in October 2022.

Communication was initiated with the CEO of Canada’s History Society, Melony Ward. Virtual meetings were held with Melony Ward and Nancy Payne. Based on a draft statement of work, a budget was developed. The project idea, including its vision, scope, and draft budget, was formally presented to the MetSoc Board of Directors at the December 2022 meeting, where it was favourably received.

Discussions on the scope and content of the project continued with Canada’s History Society during the first half of 2023. It became clear that significant funding would be required to implement the project. Budget estimates indicated that the required funding would be beyond MetSoc’s financial capacity.

During the second half of 2023, the Project Core Team began preparing a sponsorship program. A list of people and companies to contact was prepared. To support the sponsorship program, a flyer was prepared in collaboration with Victoria Woo of MetSoc. The

team also began developing a project description for the HMSC website. A letter was drafted for potential sponsors, and the project was named *Marvellous Metals Magazine* or MMM for short.

The Project Team decided to prioritize raising sufficient funds before involving Canada's History Society to implement the project while continuing to develop the content of *Marvellous Metals Magazine*.

The project made significant progress in August 2024. Dr. Konstantina Chalastara, John Goode, Murray Pearson, and Abigail Sequeira joined the Project Core Team. Their impact in increasing the sponsorship was significant. Hatch, Glencore and several other companies became sponsors with their efforts. A presentation on the project was given at the Past Presidents dinner in Halifax, at COM2024. An agreement was prepared to establish the *Marvellous Metals Magazine* account within CIM Foundation (CIMF) administration, which enabled income tax receipts to be issued to sponsors. CIMF also developed a form to allow sponsors to transfer funds to the *Marvellous Metals Magazine* account.

The first sponsor was the Hydrometallurgy Section, and the second sponsor was Dr. Joël Kapusta. The MetSoc Executive decided to sponsor the project. In the following months, 16 MetSoc Past Presidents sponsored the project. The impact of new members Konstantina, Murray, Abigail and John in increasing the sponsorship was significant. Hatch, Glencore and several other companies became sponsors with their efforts. A complete list of sponsors is included on the project website.

In March 2025, an interview article with Engin and Rebecca was published with the help of Victoria Woo, further publicizing the project.

In May 2025, Laurie-Anne Méthot joined the Project Core Team. The Project Advisory Committee was formed in October 2025 to help the project team select material for the magazine and comment on its accuracy and historical merit. The Advisory Committee included Prof. Lachlan MacKinnon, Prof. Robin Gendron, Lenore Marcuson, and Patrick Ecobichon.

Once sufficient funds were raised, communication with Canada's History Society resumed to finalize the scope of work and the contract. Discussions on the statement of work began in August 2025, and the agreement was signed in November. A decision was made to print 75,000 copies for distribution. On September 18, Canada's History Society, under the leadership of Editor Nancy Payne, ran a workshop with the Project Team. Nancy Payne with the help of Dr. Rebecca Dolgoy helped the Project Team to establish the content of MMM to make it more suitable for the age level being targeted.

From September 2025 through March 2026, the MMM Project Team dedicated significant time to working with Canada's History Society to develop and finalize the magazine's content. As part of Canada's History Society's marketing plan, a promotional flyer was prepared both in English and French and sent to the nationwide distribution list, which exceeded 20,000 subscribers, most of them teachers. In less than 48 hours, almost 75,000 copies were requested. As a result, it was decided to increase the print run to 100,000 copies, 80% in English and 20% in French. The Canada wide distribution took place in April.

In May 2026, under a special arrangement UBC printed 1,000 copies and distributed them at the Science Rendezvous event on the university campus. Dr. Dimitrios Filippou, Dr. Arthur J. Plumpton and Dr. Mike Chalkley joined the Project Team in May.

Building on the success of Marvellous Metals Magazine, the Project Team decided to restart the sponsorship campaign to publish similar magazines on critical minerals, rare earth elements, and uranium/nuclear and since it is completely sold out to reprint more copies of MMM. The journey continues. We are excited to continue trying to find ways of reaching out to youth and raise the awareness of metals and materials in our daily lives. We are identifying potential for new funding sources and nonprofit organizations to collaborate. Join us sponsoring and contributing to the success of this project.

***Engin Özberk, FCIM, CIM 50years Club Member,
Chair, METSOC Historical Metallurgy Standing Committee***

¹ MetSoc Historical Metallurgy Standing Committee and Ingenium collaborated on projects over the recent years, e.g. <https://ingenium.ca/en/collections-and-research/institute/research-projects/the-mining-and-metallurgy-legacy-project/>