

Preface

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The year 2014 is the 40th consecutive year of publishing for the Journal of Chemical Ecology, founded in 1974 by R Milton Silverstein and John Simeone. To mark this milestone, the Journal is publishing a series of short commentaries by noted scientists in the discipline. These include thoughts from some of our pioneers, influential scientists working today, and expected future leaders. We tried to identify a broad spectrum of people who would give thoughtful consideration and write succinctly as to where we were, are now, and should be headed. There was no prescribed format, and you see that they range from historical perspective and summaries to current assessment and recommendations for the future.

One common thread in this first group of 8 essays is that the field of chemical ecology has broadened considerably and is increasingly a part of mainstream science. A number of the essays comment on recurring themes: The impact of technology; the increased emphasis on evolutionary processes; the untapped opportunities in the soil and water; and not

least the importance of ‘risk takers’ in pushing the field with innovation. The latter idea is being recognized annually by Springer in its support of the Silverstein-Simeone lectures.

As our numbers have grown, as evidence by the flourishing societies of the International Society of Chemical Ecology, Asia-Pacific Association of Chemical Ecologists, and Latin American Association of Chemical Ecologists, so has our visibility. The Journal now competes with a plethora of mainstream and newer journals that seem to appear almost weekly. Yet, it remains the home for the many diverse topics that fall under the interdisciplinary umbrella of Chemical Ecology, and is widely cited. I hope that these essays and those to come in future issues will prompt a dialogue that enhances our influence as we move towards the half-century mark, and also that the vision and foresight of Milt and John is reinvigorated.

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