

# in the final analysis

*“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.”*

—Robert Louis Stevenson (attributed)

I propose an experiment, and my experimental procedures comprise the following: We go to a randomly selected venue where we are likely to encounter reasonably well-educated people (e.g., a library, where the people are more likely to have read *Treasure Island* than to have simply watched the movie). We then present our test subjects with a copy of this month’s *JOM*. After 30 minutes, we pose one question: “What discipline is represented by this publication?”

My hypothesis is that 30% of participants would identify the discipline as something like “metallurgy” or “materials;” 60% would reply with “chemistry,” “physics,” “engineering,” or some other in-the-ballpark field of study; 9% would respond with a shoulder shrug; and 1% would produce the answer that I am looking for: “agriculture.”

Come again?

Naturally, the 90% of recipients who I predict would classify *JOM* as a natural or applied sciences journal would be rigidly correct. The 9% who would be bewildered would also be correct—confused is confused. The “agricultural” 1%, however, would be basing their answer on a metaphorical insight that I see seeded throughout this edition of *JOM*.

As a professional society, TMS cares passionately about advancing the minerals, metals, and materials fields and the people who work in it. We are a society that builds bridges between *the established* and *the establishing* (be it people or technologies). TMS does this in all kinds of ways. We enable the publication of peer-reviewed papers in journals, provide platforms for the presentation and discussion of research, develop tools for the academic community to better educate young people, offer professional and soft-skill development opportunities via volunteerism, advocate on behalf of the field to lawmakers, rally the community to offer expert opinion on challenging issues, and, most importantly, build networking opportunities for colleagues to interact with peers, industry, academia, government, and across international boundaries.

Getting back to that agricultural metaphor, this issue is all about nurturing acts and growth. Turn a few pages, and you’ll see how a newly reenergized TMS Foundation is embracing a mission to help our most obvious seedlings—students and young professionals. Leaf ahead, and you’ll find pages upon pages of new TMS award recipients; as you read their individual comments, you’ll find many awardees thanking those who have mentored them and TMS for giving them a fertile platform. Elsewhere in this issue, you’ll find a story about how member Laura Sullivan has supported the growth of her students—as engineers and as people—through humanitarian aid projects. Then, there’s an interview with TMS President Liz Holm, who looks back on her year as president and looks forward to the summit that she is sowing for July to celebrate and encourage diversity in the minerals, metals, and materials communities. Talk about planting today for a sustainable harvest tomorrow!

Of course, it is not necessary to look at *JOM* to appreciate the work of the agriculturists among us. Just talk with each other. It never fails: Any discussion among colleagues invariably turns into a referential festival of stories about well-known and not so-well-known personages who influenced or energized or inspired the storytellers. I call them the “Did I ever tell you when/how/about?” stories. I know that you’ve heard them. I know that you’ve told them.

Personally, I love these reminiscences not just for the warmth of the stories but for the obvious joy in the faces and voices of the speakers. Oh, that the mentors who inspired these tales could hear those words or see those faces. I suspect that they would be very proud of what they have sown—just as you should be when those “when/how/about” stories that you seeded are told about you!

# JOM

Volume 66

Number 2

February 2014



James J. Robinson  
Executive Director

*“We are a society that builds bridges between the established and the establishing (be it people or technologies).”*