

# in the final analysis

*“Welcome back my friends to the show that never ends, we’re so glad you could attend, come inside, come inside.”*

—Emerson, Lake, and Palmer

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As this February issue of *JOM* hits the streets (to use the quaint parlance of yesterday’s newspaper industry), TMS volunteers and staff are ramping up to conduct the TMS 2018 Annual Meeting & Exhibition (TMS2018) in Phoenix, Arizona. Phoenix is a destination that the Society has not visited since January 1988. Using the magic of TMS’s partnership with SpringerLink, I mined for coverage of the 30-year-old meeting in the News & Update section of that era’s *Journal of Metals*. What treasures I found!

The best part of the TMS1988 reporting was that it was immediately preceded by a story called “Getting the Fax,” which pricelessly states, “TMS has purchased a facsimile transceiver—popularly known as a ‘fax’ machine. The fax system generates quality photocopies of pages scanned in on similar systems from virtually any point in the world.” I don’t know what pains me more—the fact that I wrote this story or that my prose was so earnest. But I digress.

The TMS1988 coverage begins with a story titled “The Excitement’s Back in TMS.” Had the excitement ever left TMS? I don’t know, but I do know that the late 1980s was a significant period of transition for TMS. It was exciting (and still is!). The Society had recently become a fully independent association outside of being an entity within the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers (AIME); had changed its name from The Metallurgical Society to The Minerals, Metals & Materials Society; and was in the process of establishing five robust technical divisions that would provide the signature Society infrastructure for many years to come.

One of the big differences of transition between TMS2018 and TMS1988 is that the total conference registration 30 years ago exceeded 5,000 attendees. This surpasses by a few hundred the number of people that we anticipate welcoming to TMS2018. It is not that the meeting has been shrinking over the last 30 years. Back in those days, TMS and the Society of Mining Engineers would occasionally hold their annual meetings in tandem—an artifact of when the two societies were constituents of AIME. By the mid-1980s, the AIME member societies were pursuing more independent paths, and Phoenix represented the penultimate occurrence that TMS and SME (today’s Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration) would blend their annual meetings. The following year in Las Vegas, Nevada, would mark the last such collaboration. Now, the TMS Annual Meeting & Exhibition is nearly 5,000 attendees without a collaborator. That’s an impressive flowering of the Society.

While 1988 saw the TMS and SME annual meetings headed in different directions, the two societies are now collaborating in other ways. For example, we are partners in a new meeting: Extraction 2018, which will be held August 26–29, in Ottawa, Canada. One month earlier in Santa Barbara, California, SME is helping TMS for the third consecutive time organize Diversity in the Minerals, Metals, and Materials Professions. And, of course, we still collaborate on various joint ventures in the scaled-down AIME.

One other notable similarity/dissimilarity between TMS1988 and TMS2018: Both meetings scheduled an opening conference luncheon on Monday. The 1988 speaker was Barry Goldwater, a well-known but non-technical and polarizing politician in the United States. TMS2018 will stick closer to the knitting by featuring a well-respected all-conference lunchtime speaker, Charlie Kuehmann, vice president of Materials Engineering at SpaceX and Tesla Motors—two companies renowned for their innovation in materials and manufacturing. Kuehmann works for some guy named Elon. I think that I’ve heard of him.



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