

# in the final analysis

*“Son of Jor-el, kneel before Zod!”*  
—Zod

If you know your comic book lore or comic book movies, Zod is a renegade general from Superman’s home planet of Krypton, having the same superpowers as Superman himself. Because of a bitter grudge against Superman’s father, Zod lives to humiliate and subjugate our unfailingly noble and heroic “Man of Steel” (c.f., *Superman II*, which is the best Superman movie according to my cinematic palate). Many years ago, a real-life man of steel for his seeming invincibility was boxer Mike Tyson, otherwise known as Iron Mike. While more Zod than Superman in character and disposition, Tyson was unrelenting and merciless in the ring during the late 1980s . . . until the pummeler became the pummeled courtesy of journeyman “Buster” Douglas. One year before that greatest upset in boxing history, Mike Tyson forever intertwined himself in my mind with the TMS Annual Meeting & Exhibition.

True, true, true. Here’s why: 31 years ago in Las Vegas, we convened TMS1989 in a hotel full of excitement, celebrities, glitterati, and conspicuous wealth because superman and super-luminary Mike Tyson was on property to destroy another opponent. The atmosphere crackled with electricity, even more so than normal for a TMS event, if such a thing is even possible! As I later wrote in *JOM*:

“TMS Scores a Knockout in Las Vegas: The brief match between world heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson and challenger Frank Bruno may have been the featured attraction at the Las Vegas Hilton on Saturday, February 25, 1989, but another knockout event—the 1989 TMS Annual Meeting and Exhibition—commanded those same facilities for the next five days. In fact, this year’s meeting showed TMS to be at the peak of its formidable programming powers, as the society broke long-standing attendance records.”

A lot has changed since 1989 (beside Mike Tyson tumbling far from his status as pugilist extraordinaire and spending time in jail). During that exciting meeting in Las Vegas, we had about 160 sessions and 3,000 attendees, we used overhead and slide projectors, the abstracts in the technical program were typewritten, we attracted 200+ mostly aluminum exhibitors, we sold hundreds of hardcover books (also typewritten), we sold photocopies of individual papers, and everyone registered using forms torn from *JOM*. Today, we expect nearly 500 technical sessions and 4,500+ attendees, we use PowerPoint for everything, there are no abstracts in the on-site program as they are all online and in the app (no apps or Internet back in Mike Tyson’s heyday), our aluminum-centric exhibition has contracted along with the U.S. aluminum industry, we give all attendees papers virtually and for free via SpringerLink, and everyone registers via secure e-commerce. Oh yes, one joyful difference of great significance: If you look at the event photos from 1989 in *JOM*, you’ll see that the diversity profile of our event has changed considerably over the decades—a most welcome change for TMS and our community overall!

While we can’t replicate the zeitgeist of having in-his-prime Mike Tyson on-site, TMS2021 will nonetheless have an extra charge of excitement as this event will celebrate the 150th anniversary of TMS via its origination within the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers, which itself was founded in 1871. From March 14–21, our members will reflect on that 150-year heritage, consider the present, and look to an exciting future as only remarkable individuals such as those found within the TMS membership can envision. Did I mention that Diversity in the Minerals, Metals, and Materials Professions 4 will be co-located with TMS2021?

What are the topics to be discussed next March? You tell us as July is when abstracts are due. Act quickly so that your contribution is among those that help make TMS2021 an installment that we will remember and discuss for decades to come.

# JOM

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