

IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS

"So, in January 1949, the first issue of the Journal of Metals was published. I was listed as both editorial and business manager and had a busy time getting some advertising and interesting articles to assure our journal's sound basis. Once Journal of Metals' success seemed assured, we started looking for an editor and an advertising manager."

— Ernest Kirkendall, "Marking JOM's 50th Anniversary with a Look at the Journal's Origins," January 1999 JOM

Many are surprised to learn that the de facto first editor of JOM was Ernest Kirkendall—yes, he of Kirkendall Effect fame. As Ernest knew back in the 1940s, a solid editorial and business model was essential for success. That said, a vital third ingredient for a successful membership journal is a firm connection with the audience that the journal serves. JOM continues to have this, but I candidly sense that the tides of the time have JOM drifting a bit off course. This month's issue marks a roll out of changes that course correct and focus on maintaining and building on our essential connection to the membership. I'll explain.

We all know that journal publishing has changed considerably in the 2000s. In many ways, it has all become very . . . transactional—a manifestation of what Bill Gates coined as "Content Is King," with online audiences demanding more and more personalized content to consume. It is an era built more for the immediacy of search engines and metatags and less for the reader who appreciates the creativity of the thoughtful editor who crafts an engaging editorial flow. As a destination for publishing technical content, the modern JOM is a very attractive venue. As a membership journal, the mammoth-sized JOM of recent vintage has become inefficient as the member content can be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of technical articles. Candidly, receiving a 300-page issue monthly does more to numb readers than engage them. Not surprisingly, many TMS members have asked us to stop sending to them the journal—presumably to protect straining coffee tables and to preserve the backs and knees of overburdened mail carriers. With fewer issues of JOM being delivered and with anti-email laws proliferating worldwide, the opportunities for JOM to communicate TMS content to members has ironically diminished in the content-is-king era. . . . Do something TMS!

We are. . . . With this first issue of our 74th publishing year, our robust scholarly technical publishing continues unabated. But, all of the technical papers are housed exclusively online. No print (unless someone purchases a special subscription). In tandem, this month introduces the printing and mailing of JOM: The Magazine. This publication is an excerpt of the full JOM and delivers TMS member features, news, overviews, opinion and insight, and Society updates—the kinds of content that members enjoy contributing and reading. It is also where "In the Final Analysis" continues to reside. In the coming months, I believe that you will find The Magazine to be informative, engaging, and even fun. We refer to this format as giving members a "touch of TMS." That touch will come to all TMS professional members worldwide ten times per year. You'll have it in your hands when you want to read but don't want more screen time. If you prefer more screen time, each issue of JOM: The Magazine is also housed as a single PDF on the JOM website. The full monthly technical JOM, inclusive of The Magazine section, continues to be housed in its entirety as our TMS "publication of record" on SpringerLink. If you don't want to read in print or online, then print JOM: The Magazine is conveniently recyclable. It is also conveniently open to your editorial submissions and story suggestions. The member journal works best when the members are contributing!

As a past editor of JOM, I am very excited by these changes—all of the same content but more conveniently packaged to help engage and maintain the TMS community. That has been the goal since 1949, and we will continue to adapt our publishing platforms as necessary to continue to meet it for at least another 74 years.

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