

EDITORIAL

Outstanding Reviewers of *JASMS* Manuscripts, 2010–2011

At the 2011 ASMS Conference held in Denver, the *JASMS* Editors and Editorial Board members, the ASMS Board of Directors, and representatives from Springer were feted to a scrumptious dinner after a discussion on the state of affairs of the journal. During the dinner, we congratulated Drs. Stephen Blanksby (University of Wollongong, Australia), Ken Tomer (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, Research Triangle Park, NC), and Yury Tsybin (Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Switzerland) as our top performing reviewers for 2010–2011.

During 2010–2011, the journal received 380 manuscripts, and this number has been steadily increasing on an annual basis. For comparison, the journal received 193 manuscripts in 2001–2002. This means, of course, that our need for reviewers' help is increasing as well. For the 380 manuscripts we received, 549 reviewers were requested a total of 1049 times to review, and 77% of these requests were accepted. For each manuscript, it took an average of 4.8 wk for the journal to receive all of the reviewers' comments and recommendations. If you are surprised with how long it takes the journal to receive reviewer comments, consider that the average time was 6.5 wk only 4 short y ago. Our best reviewers for 2010–2011 (Drs. Blanksby, Tomer, and Tsybin) submitted their comments in just over 2 wks time per manuscript.

So why can't reviewers complete their assignment within the 2-wk timeframe that the journal requests? Poor memory is not likely a valid reason. The journal sends reminder e-mail



Stephen Blanksby



Ken Tomer and Michael Gross (photo courtesy of Susan Weintraub).

messages 3 d prior to the review due date and additional messages 7 d after the due date. We surmise that the more likely culprits are the busy schedules of hard-working scientists and the somewhat related issue of priority. We all have too little time to accomplish all of the items on our wish list and to balance family time with work. We're too busy doing experiments in the lab, writing up our results for papers to be submitted to *JASMS*, drafting reports for our boss, submitting research proposals, teaching and meeting with students, and



Yury Tsybin and Michael Gross (photo courtesy of Susan Weintraub).

attending conferences such as those sponsored by ASMS. On top of that, some of you are bombarded with requests from many other journals to review their manuscripts. Did you know that in 2009, there were over 25,000 peer-reviewed journals in the science, technical, and medical fields, and these journals accounted for over 1.5 million articles annually (Ware, M.; Mabe, M. *The STM Report—An Overview of Scientific and Scholarly Journal Publishing*. International Association of Scientific, Technical, and Medical Publishers: 2009)? The total number of journals and articles has been growing at a rate of about 3.5% per y. Who has the time to read all of these articles, let alone review more papers?

Remember that when you agreed to accept our assignment and review a paper for *JASMS*, you also agreed to abide by our request to submit your comments within 14 d. I am sure that some of you who agree have papers from other journals that are waiting for your attention. I hope that you have allocated the proper amount of time needed for the *JASMS* manuscript that is within the 2-wk timeframe.

You also made a promise to the journal that you will *try your best* to give some priority to the review. We discussed this earlier (*J. Am. Soc. Mass Spectrom.* **2009**, *20*, i–ii; *J. Am. Soc. Mass Spectrom.* **2010**, *21*, I1–I2) and other journals have made similar pleas (e.g., *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **2011**, *133*, 7239). We won't send a collection agency after you for a late review (but that's an intriguing thought). Let us know if you need extra time. Even before you agree to review, if you know that a trip to Maui is coming up, let us know that you might need some

additional time for the review. This allows the editors to decide if additional reviewers are needed. (But what better environment to review an exciting manuscript than warm, ocean breezes, and cool Mai Tais?)

In my 2009 Editorial, I discussed the incentives for prompt reviews. Reviewers are unpaid in the traditional sense for their efforts. We reward our best reviewers with a nice meal at the ASMS Conference. Furthermore, reviewer performance is one of several criteria for invitation to our Editorial Board. The 2009–2010 top reviewers, Ryan Julian, Gavin Reid, and Chrys Wesdemiotis, were selected to the *JASMS* Editorial Board in 2011.

We thank all authors and reviewers for continuing to support *JASMS*. We welcome any feedback, suggestions, and comments to help improve the journal.

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