

To Improve is to Change

CHANGE...a six-letter word in the English language that strikes fear in many. To change is to make different. But it is the *unknown* consequences of the change that some people fear. As the start of the New Year begins, you should have noticed a change to the cover of our journal. This is one of several changes that have been implemented since I started my role as Editor-in-Chief two years ago.

So why make changes to *JASMS*? Sir Winston Churchill, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, is widely credited with the statement, “To improve is to change, so to be perfect is to have changed often.” *JASMS* has been doing well. It remains a premier journal focused on the science of mass spectrometry. Our Founding Editor-in-Chief, Mike Gross, expertly captained the ship, steering the journal through the changing waves of mass spectrometry and the publishing world. *JASMS* began when electrospray ionization (ESI) and matrix assisted laser desorption/ionization (MALDI) were in their infancy. Now both are mature techniques, almost middle aged, and the robust growth of MS is a direct result of their contributions. New ‘omics’-based strategies that generate large MS datasets and, potentially, new knowledge are popular today. MS-related instrumentation, software, sample handling and, importantly, their applications, keep improving and expanding – and these developments are reported in *JASMS*.

Some of the changes that have been implemented over the past 2 years are subtle, but with the intention of improving the journal. Authors and readers requested that we increase the number of figures allowed in the main text, and so we increased the number of figures from six to eight. (I remind you that additional materials that are accessible by our readers on-line can be placed into Supplemental Materials. And don’t forget that *color* illustrations are published at *no* charge.)

We continue to publish *Critical Insight* articles. The aims of *Critical Insights* are to highlight topics of current interest in a thought-provoking way, to provide insider information that is often difficult to publish in regular articles, and to provoke response and debate. Coupled with *Critical Insights*, we encourage the submission of short *Accounts and Perspectives* (A&P) articles. These A&P articles are meant to spotlight recent developments in a focused area of mass spectrometry together with a view to the future.

Other changes made have been behind the scenes at the journal. The size of our Editorial Board was expanded from 24 to 36 members to involve more people directly in keeping the quality of the journal high. We invite people who have contributed to *JASMS* to serve on the Editorial Board to help promote the journal, advise us on future improvements, and to continue contributing to the content of the journal by reviewing and submitting manuscripts. Lingjun Li (University of Wisconsin-Madison) started her duties in 2017 as a new Associate Editor; Lingjun has been handling manuscripts focused on peptidomics, proteomics, imaging, and bioanalytical chemistry. Kelsey Cook (University of Tennessee and the National Science Foundation) stepped down as an Associate Editor at the end of 2016 after 27 years of distinguished service to the journal (Fig. 1). Kelsey was one of the

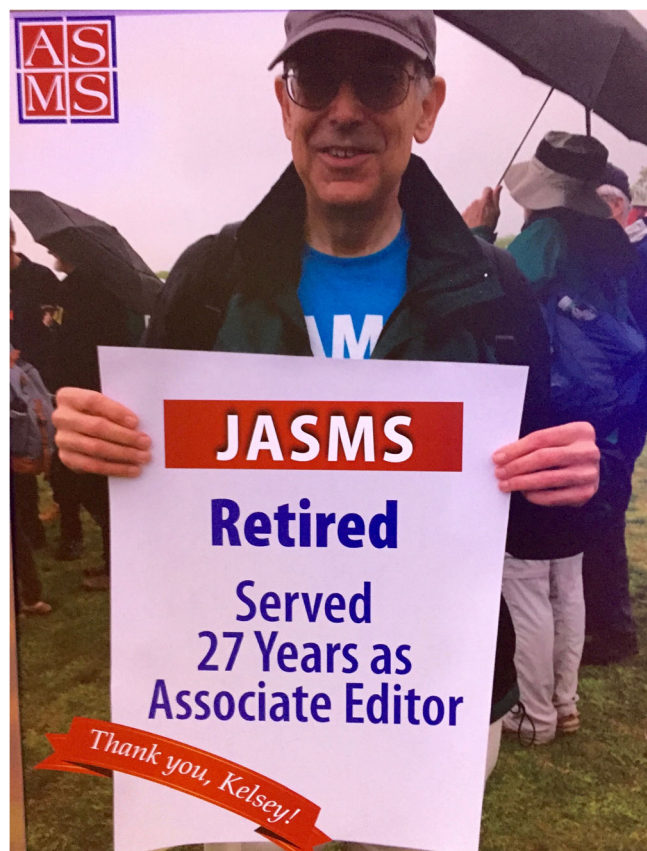


Figure 1. We thank Kelsey Cook for his long-time service to ASMS and for decades of molding *JASMS*



Figure 2. So many cover designs to choose from

original Associate Editors in 1990, serving the journal even longer than Mike Gross. We have missed his insights, his sage wisdom, and his calming presence at our journal meetings.

More changes are on the horizon as we continue looking for ways to give ASMS members the best mass spectrometry work in the optimal format. Our new cover design, debuting this issue, is not radically changed from our previous cover, but it should be a more attractive canvas for artwork that highlights one of the articles in the issue. The process of redesigning the cover began a few years ago based upon suggestions from the ASMS Publications Committee. Many layouts were considered (Figure 2), and the merits of each design were reconsidered by the ASMS Board of Directors, the *JASMS* Editors, and the Editorial Board. Comments received at an evening workshop held at the 2017 ASMS Conference were considered as well. In fact, we retained the red color because many of you considered it to be a unique brand for the journal. *We listen to you.*

How we read papers has changed since the start of *JASMS* in 1990. In late 2016, we polled the ASMS membership on their experiences with *JASMS* and how they viewed its content. The results of the survey encouraged us to consider alternative electronic formats of the journal. Each issue is now available as a digital “flipbook” that can be read using any common Web browser. As we all gain experience with this format, feel free to let us know if you like it and to suggest other improvements to the journal. *We listen to you.*



Figure 3. (left to right) Bob Murphy, Mike Gross, and Ron Hites at the 2015 ASMS Conference (St. Louis, MO) in front of a photo taken in 1990 of Bob Murphy presenting Ron Hites with a plaque commemorating Ron’s work in the establishment of *JASMS*



Figure 4. *JASMS* is so interesting that readers take it to the beach. (left) Erin Baker (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory) and (right) Iain Campuzano (Amgen)

Moving forward, there are two primary tasks that I ask of all readers.

1. *Send us your best work, including the best applications of MS.* For any journal, what's most important is inside the covers. *JASMS* belongs to you members of ASMS. You can help our Society's journal by sending us your best mass spectrometry work for consideration. Our posted Aims and Scope state that *JASMS* is "devoted mainly to the publication of research papers covering all aspects of mass spectrometry. Papers from all fields of scientific inquiry in which mass spectrometry plays a role will be considered." In addition, *JASMS* is "intended to be comprehensive, and its aim is to publish papers on both fundamentals and applications of mass spectrometry." Based on the 2016 survey, some members perceive the journal to be more heavily biased on fundamentals and instrumentation, whereas others see a good balance between fundamentals and applications. We strive for the latter. Manuscripts reporting *applications* of mass spectrometry that are novel and significant are encouraged and welcomed. We want to highlight the newest developments of mass spectrometry, the highest quality of mass spectrometry science, and the best applications of mass spectrometry in all areas of science.
2. *Tell us how you feel about JASMS and how the journal should change.* *JASMS* belongs to ASMS members. It's your journal. Tell us what you like in the journal (and what you don't like).

JASMS was spearheaded by Ron Hites (ASMS President in 1990), Bob Murphy (Vice President for Programs), and Mike Gross (Figure 3). Much has changed since the inception of the journal, and we expect more changes in the future. *To improve is to change.* As former President John F. Kennedy once stated in 1963, "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

Keep reading *JASMS* (Figure 4).

Joseph A. Loo
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