JASMS Celebrates its 20th Birthday

JASMS starts its 20th year with the publication of this issue. Thinking back over the past ten years, since my last anniversary editorial, I find it difficult to imagine a time period in scientific publishing during which so many major changes occurred. Prior to this period, scientific publishing remained relatively constant. Although increases in the speed of transportation (e.g., express mail) allowed articles to be shipped faster to the editor's office and to reviewers, this increase in speed was often not rate-determining for publication. Starting in the late 1990s, however, many changes occurred making scientific publishing more rapid, more efficient, more productive and more disseminated, largely owing to the internet. Let's look back approximately ten years to see what happened with your society journal.

The most important advance in our journal's development is the **freely accessible** status of articles after one year of publication. This means that a JASMS article located on Google, for example, can be downloaded by anyone. Such broad dissemination was hardly imaginable in 1999. This advance is consistent with the aims of the ASMS to provide a venue for the exchange of scientific information in mass spectrometry. We thank Chris Enke for pushing this idea, and the ASMS and Elsevier for implementing it.

Dissemination complements free access. JASMS is much more **widely disseminated** today than ten years ago. Incredibly, it arrives each month on the desks of nearly 7700 members of the ASMS. It is also available on Science Direct, and over 5000 institutions access the journal via this Elsevier site. This constitutes the strongest recommendation for publishing in JASMS as few journals in our subject or in the general areas of analytical, physical, bio and organic chemistry can make this claim.

To provide additional assurance that your articles are widely available, especially to the biological and biochemical communities, the journal successfully petitioned in 1998 the National Library of Medicine of the United States, for indexing of all articles by **MedLine**.

Speed of dissemination is another area in which we have advanced. JASMS, starting in the mid 1990s, was a pioneering journal in **electronic preprints**. We organized a web site and made "camera-ready" copies of accepted articles available to the ASMS membership, weeks and months before formal publication. Those early experiments were arranged at my institution, Washington University, Department of Chemistry, for which the editor is grateful. Today, we continue to publish electronic reprints, starting with a "camera-ready" copy five days after acceptance. These versions

are fully citable via a DOI (digital object identifier) number that remains with the article forever.

Submission and review of articles is also fully electronic via Editorial Manager. We take for granted these electronic advantages, sometimes forgetting that just 10 years ago, submission was via postal service or a relatively expensive air delivery service. One or two-day turnaround was the best we could expect. Now articles arrive in our office in seconds via the publisher's electronic submission manager. Even the organization of the managing editor's office has changed. Formerly the file drawers were full of paper records of all our submissions, reviews, and other editorial transactions; the office is now fully "paperless."

Electronic storage also makes possible facile publication of supplementary information, giving the most seriously interested reader access to important details. Supplementary information was nearly impossible for a "print-only" journal.

An important sign of good health of a journal is its **growth**. During the past ten years, JASMS **submissions** increased from 190 articles per year to 350, an increase of nearly 85%. More than 55% of our submissions now come from countries besides the United States. Despite our name as the *Journal of the American Society . . .*, our submission distribution clearly indicates that we are an international journal in our subject, very much like the *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* is in the chemical sciences.

Over the same period, the **number of articles** published by JASMS increased from 137 to 214, representing a 56% increase.

JASMS was a leader in publishing **full references** (with article titles). We first recommended that authors voluntarily adopt this policy starting approximately 10 years ago. More recently, providing full references, including article titles, is a requirement of the journal, enhancing significantly the utility of the "literature cited" section of each article. We thank David Sparkman for advocating this policy.

In ten years, the number of **advertising pages** has **grown approximately 36%**. **Our advertisers help significantly with supporting the journal, and we thank them for this. We feel that advertising also provides a useful source of information to our readers and the members of the ASMS.**

Two features of JASMS began during the past decade. One is the **"Focus Sections."** Our first, arranged by Kelsey Cook, was published in April, 1998, on the subject of synthetic polymers. Since then, the editors of JASMS organized 32 focus sections (and two underway) to honor ASMS awardees and to draw attention to subjects of current interest. A newer feature is **Critical**

Insights, arranged by Carol Robinson. Critical Insight articles explore current topics in mass spectrometry and provide an informed view into issues not normally reported in primary research papers. We hope these features provide our readership with the best of our science and assure a strong relationship between the ASMS and the journal.

Another major change occurred in 2005. *JASMS* began to publish a new pictorial on each cover. This policy has continued, enlivening the appearance of the journal (you might note the cover of this issue as an example of a particularly interesting one). The new cover was supplemented with **graphical abstracts** in 2007. These improvements would be difficult to sustain were it not for the electronic submission and communication and the more widespread use of color.

The last ten years have seen the emergence of the “**impact factor**,” which has become one of the quick ways of evaluating scholarly journals. A journal’s impact factor is the average number of citations in a given year to articles published during the two preceding years. Impact factors are controversial principally because they can be enhanced by reviews and tutorials, which are often more highly cited than are research articles, and because “impact” depends on field (articles in biological areas often receive more cites than those in chemistry). Despite the controversy, impact factors are here to stay; they are made possible by electronic communication and databases. *JASMS* has maintained an impact factor in the range of 3.5 without publishing any significant number of reviews or accounts. It is the highest in mass spectrometry research journals and remains competitive with the best journals in the analytical and physical chemistry sciences.

The past ten years would not have been possible without the efforts of many persons, whom deserve

considerable credit and thanks. First and foremost are **Joyce Neff**, who has served as managing editor for 11 years, and the associate editors, **Veronica Bierbaum, Jennifer Brodbelt, Kelsey Cook, Joe Loo, and Carol Robinson**. We miss the contributions of former associate editors **Gary Glish and Simon Gaskell**, who resigned from their duties during the past 10 years. Deserving also of considerable thanks are present and past publishers from Elsevier: **Jon Glover, Swan Go, Laura ter Haar, Egbert van Weezenbeek, Karel Nederveen, and Rob van Daalen**. Important also are the commitment, efforts, and support of the editorial board members, who are selected because they already contributed to the journal by publishing and reviewing articles. Past and present members of the ASMS board, especially the board members for publications, deserve special thanks. Starting in 1999, **Hilkka Kenttämä, Susan Weintraub, Richard Cole, Kermit Murray, Carlito Lebrilla, and Mary Rodgers** served as board members for publications and were the liaison between the ASMS and the journal. **Judith Sjöberg**, Executive Director of the ASMS, and her office colleagues also deserve considerable credit.

The journal would not exist were it not for its **authors, reviewers, and readers**. Authors have many choices of journals to which they can submit, and we appreciate when they choose *JASMS*. Unlike authors, reviewers are not normally identifiable, and their work is often thankless. Without them, however, the scientific enterprise would cease. I want to offer special thanks to the authors, who provide a vote of confidence when they choose our society’s journal, and the reviewers, who work so diligently behind the scenes to assure the high quality of *JASMS* in its 20th year.

Michael L. Gross
Editor-in-Chief