

Letter from the President

Journal Update

MRS is all about communication. We run the best meetings about materials, and our publications provide much of the very best technical information in our subject area. The *MRS Bulletin* has a unique format with its topical focus areas and has become widely recognized as one of the great resources for up-to-date comprehensive review material. The *Journal of Materials Research*, or *JMR*, provides a more traditional "learned journal" format in which materials researchers can publish original work in a fully refereed and archival organ. It competes with other learned journals on the basis of the quality of the papers, and the breadth of its topical coverage. Our Meetings and the *MRS Bulletin* enjoy these advantages, too, in addition to their individual distinguishing features.

JMR was launched in 1986 to fill a gap in the materials literature—to be an interdisciplinary materials journal, mirroring the content of our technical meetings. Like most society-owned journals, *JMR* is run on a not-for-profit basis and publication in its pages does not depend upon membership in the Society. MRS members have the option to buy annual subscriptions at a lower cost than nonmembers, and I encourage all of you to consider doing so. The print version of the journal is better-produced than most, and—significantly for those who publish micrographs—it is printed on very high-quality paper with excellent gray-scale reproduction. The journal is also available in electronic form, which has the great attractions of searchability and (of course) space savings.

A succession of *JMR* editors, starting with Charles Duke, have guided the development of the journal to its present position, and the current editor-in-chief, Gordon Pike, continues to make significant improvements that will benefit authors and readers alike. Since it is difficult to see the changes simply by looking at the journal itself, it is worthwhile to review them briefly here.



"Our goal is to publish the most significant work across the entire spectrum of materials research."

Alex King

Perhaps the most significant change this year has been a marked improvement in the speed with which articles are published. *JMR* had (like many other journals) suffered from a backlog of papers in the system, somewhere between submission, decision, and publication, and this backlog has now been eliminated. New tracking and publishing software has been brought on-line, and the average time to a decision on a newly submitted paper is now significantly under two months. All of the review process is now handled electronically, and some of the articles in the current volume have even appeared on-line within a month of first submission. This is a great tribute to the staff, the associate editors, and the reviewers alike, and speed of publication remains a high priority at *JMR*: Important work deserves to be published quickly.

Increasingly significant work is being published in *JMR*. The rate at which *JMR* articles are cited elsewhere has been increasing by more than 15% per year, and all indications are that the level of impact will continue to grow.

The quality of the work published in *JMR* is also increasing, with a rigorous review process and high editorial standards. Papers that are published in *JMR* are not merely "technically correct," but are also of clear significance, and it is this requirement that results in the growing impact of the journal. Your paper will not attract a large number of citations just because it is published in *JMR*—it will be published in *JMR* because it has the potential to attract a large number of citations.

Further changes are in store for our flagship journal, although these will not be obvious to the casual observer. You will still see the same dark-blue cover and the traditional layout that is so characteristic of a learned journal. Editor-in-chief Pike has committed to further broadening the technical coverage of the journal, consistent with its original intent, and you will soon begin to see the publication of a greater breadth of subject matter, addressing more materials classes and more aspects of their study and performance. Our goal is to publish the most significant work across the entire spectrum of materials research.

We are confident that by continuing to provide better service to authors, and ever-improving content to its readers, *JMR* will become the preeminent organ for the publication of the most important new findings about all classes of materials. I hope you will consider publishing yours there, too. You can submit new findings as rapid communications or as full-length articles, but either way, I think you will be pleased with the service that you receive and the impact that your paper makes if it is published in *JMR*.

ALEX KING
2002 MRS President

MRS Elects Board of Directors for 2003

Members of the Materials Research Society have elected one officer and four directors to join the 2003 Board of Directors.

The annual election ended October 23, 2002. See page 903.