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Letter from the Editor

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers:

One of my interesting experiences (in common to many other academics) is watching the faces of students when they discover that despite my name being mentioned in their text, I am still alive! I freely admit the same sense of surprise when I got to drink beer with Peter Debye and sit in lectures given by Coulson. Then, again, my doctoral mentor, Michael Cefola, was a Pichler student and was an integral part of the team that first isolated and characterized the chemical and physical properties of Plutonium during the Stagg Field phase of the Manhattan Project. The focus of this issue of the Journal is the work of a scientific giant whose life's work included the discovery development of polarography. Heyrovský's use of the dropping mercury electrode drew attention away from static electrochemistry toward dynamic, time-domain electrochemical phenomena. Electrochemistry is not my field but, closer to home, I would suggest it was an event akin to Tswett's recognition of how chromatography actually worked changing an area of chemical separations perhaps?

There is another interesting aspect of the early history of polarography. Those of us that did the experiment as pre-graduate university students remember the tedium of manually changing applied "voltage" and writing down the response of a ballistic galvanometer, plotting the results and reporting our findings. When I came to Duke long ago I discovered the Department still had an original commercial polarography. It was fully automated! That's right—just as Prof. RNDr. J. Barek, CSc., the Guest Editor for this Issue, writes in his introduction (*vide infra*).

I would be delighted if readers suggested other topics that could be celebrated in dedication issues of the Journal. Martin and Synge? Martin and James? Fred McClafferty's use of a physics toy to do structural organic chemistry?

C. H. Lochmüller
Editor-in-Chief

