
Editorial

Passing of the torch

All of the Letters and full papers in this special issue of NJC are contributions from NJC's 1998–2000 Board members. We are honored to have their work, which we hope you will enjoy reading.

This issue also introduces a new feature, Opinions. The first two, on *chimie douce*, are by Jacques Livage, corresponding member of the French National Academy of Sciences, and by Robert Corriu, NJC Board member. Both are well known for their work in this new and exciting field of chemistry. You will find a description of Opinions on the following page.

This month is also a time of renewal. We welcome a new set of Board members and thank those on the 1998–2000 Board, who now leave us, for their valuable assistance these past 3 years. You will discover the composition of the new Boards on the inside front cover of this issue. Special thanks go to the Associate Editors, Reinhard Brückner, Tomas Hudlicky and Jeremy Sanders (as well as Robert Crabtree and Pierre Braunstein, who will continue to serve), for their hard work in this position, at a time when the future of NJC was uncertain.

Three years ago, after 20 years of existence, the journal embarked on a new phase. The CNRS, NJC's parent organization, concluded an accord with the RSC to publish the journal jointly. Our goal was to make NJC a first-class, interdisciplinary chemistry journal, read and appreciated by chemists worldwide, while providing exceptional service to our authors. We have made good progress. The time between submission and publication of articles has been reduced drastically. The impact factor has increased from about 1.8 three years ago to 2.2 for the latest figure. The number of submissions has increased by over one-third in one year. The number of subscriptions has doubled in the same period. Clearly we have won our bet! We thank you, our readers and authors, for supporting the journal.

But we will not rest there. More changes are yet to come, to accompany the continuing evolution in scientific publishing. Direct electronic submission *via* the web is in preparation. More rapid evaluation of manuscripts using electronic means is being pursued. Yet one thing will stay the same: efficient, personalized and courteous service to authors. This includes editing of accepted articles by native-English-speaking chemists, a service long-offered by the journal and especially appreciated by many authors.

After 8 years as Editor-in-Chief, I am retiring from this position (but I will continue to make mischief as a member of the Advisory Board). As my last words in this column, I wish to thank (in addition to those already mentioned) the editorial and production staff of the offices in Montpellier (CNRS) and Cambridge (RSC). Their professionalism and good humor helped to resolve all problems rapidly and agreeably. It is an assurance of quality that these same persons will continue to watch over the journal. Thank you all! It has been fun.

Only one thing is left for me to do: I present my successor, Dr. Clément Sanchez of the Université Pierre et Marie Curie in Paris. He is a member of the CNRS and director of the Condensed Materials Chemistry Laboratory at this university. An internationally recognized scientist, his specialty is the chemistry and physical properties of transition metal oxide gels. This is a fundamentally interdisciplinary field allying the synthesis of new organic–inorganic hybrid materials with a study of their structural, mechanical and optical properties. Who better than Clément could represent the interdisciplinarity of NJC? He knows the journal well, both as a faithful author and as a member of the Editorial Board.

It is with great pleasure and total confidence that I pass the torch on to him. Welcome, Clément, and good luck!

Odile Eisenstein
Montpellier

Taking up the torch

I wish to thank the CNRS, RSC and Odile Eisenstein for offering me the editorship of the *New Journal of Chemistry*. It is a prestigious and touching legacy that Odile leaves me, one that I know is dear to her

heart. She could not have carried out her editorial work as competently as she did if she had not been a scientist of the highest level, with a worldwide reputation. From her scientific background, she has always favored interdisciplinarity and fought with spirit against thematic enclosures. This same general philosophy will guide me as Editor-in Chief of NJC.

The impact of chemistry in our modern world, preoccupied with its future, no longer needs to be shown. Chemistry covers vast and important domains for our societies such as energy, environment, biology and medicine, agribusiness and materials. Through its multiple facets and numerous interfaces with other disciplines, chemistry is the quintessential multidisciplinary science. A general chemistry journal must promote all aspects of chemistry, exposing the richness of its various specialties and subfields. It can contribute to the development of fundamental research by promoting the diffusion of high quality work without neglecting to show the benefits of this research in its potential applications.

This is the major role of NJC: to allow creative chemists to express themselves at their best. NJC should be one of the major players on the editorial scene, representing an open and non-segregated forum spanning the range from molecular to supramolecular chemistry to hybrid networks, well-crystallized to amorphous materials, soft to hard matter, experimental work to modeling. This “rubbing of shoulders” among different types of chemistry will aid in the conception and development of new systems, systems that are adapted and adaptable for the needs of our societies.

Scientific journals play two roles for researchers: that of making their work known and that of allowing their productivity and creativity to be evaluated. This evaluation is extensively used by institutions, industrial firms and various sponsors to rate research groups and allocate resources. In this context, the frantic race to publish is, in my personal opinion, best handled by not-for-profit learned society journals as a guarantee of quality and relevance.

Clément Sanchez
Paris

NJC would like to have your **OPINION**

“Everyone has an opinion!” and if you would like to share your opinion with the chemical community, *New Journal of Chemistry* now gives you the opportunity to do so.

NJC will publish an “Opinion” on any subject related to chemistry. Opinions should normally be limited to topics closely related to chemistry. This can include topics that are highly focused as well as those of broader interest to the chemical community. An Opinion is not intended to be a description of a consensual point-of-view on a given topic but could raise the need for a counter-Opinion. It is a short, refereed, citable article on a topic related to chemistry that normally reports no new data but presents an opinion, hypothesis or conjecture on a topic judged by the referees and editor to be of interest to the readership. Examples of possible Opinions include proposal of a new mechanism for a known reaction or a proposed reinterpretation of previously reported data or concepts. The format is intended to allow more leeway for conjecture than the traditional formats. It should not be used to report a proposal that could be readily tested by currently available methods and published as a standard article. Opinions also could cover more general subjects related to educational, ethical, philosophical or sociological concerns of the chemical community. It should contain nothing that the referees judge offensive.

Ideally, an Opinion should not be longer than one printed page although no strict constraint on the length will be implemented. It will have a one-sentence abstract as well as a limited list of references. An Opinion may lead to the submission of a counter-Opinion, although non-controversial issues could also be of interest to the chemical community.

Please send your Opinion to the Associate Editor of your choice or the Montpellier Editorial Office as you would submit any other manuscript to the journal. In view of the intrinsically short length of Opinions, we encourage submission by electronic means whenever possible.