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Foreword

The meeting chairman knows that the job is really over when it is time to prepare a report on HPCE'97 for the Symposium volumes. It is a tradition that allows the readers to reflect on the highlights of the meeting before they peruse the resulting publications. It is a good opportunity for all attendees to remember the stimulating interactions that they had with their colleagues, as well as the exciting science. As the chairman I am pleased to remember that the meeting was a resounding success and reflected well on the hard work of a large group of volunteers from the local society (CASSS), as well the professional organizational skills of Shirley Schlessinger and Tom Gilbert. Also the vision and support of Barry Karger was a strong factor in the continuing evolution and hence health of the meeting series. The excellent program was a reflection of the insight of the scientific committee. HPCE'97 was the ninth in the series and one could perhaps expect a mature and less exciting meeting. Fortunately this was not the case, largely due to a refocusing and extension of the scope of the meeting, with the addition of other microscale analytical techniques to the original theme of capillary electrophoresis. The new focus was emphasized by the workshops put on before the meeting. These workshops were directed by international authorities in their fields and were popular with the delegates. The fields covered were microfabrication of analytical instrumentation, microanalysis of proteins and capillary electrochromatography.

Part of the successful atmosphere of the meeting was due to the location at the Disneyland hotel, with a direct monorail connection into the Magic Kingdom! Furthermore, the west coast of the USA is between Asia and Europe and this helped the meet-

ing have a strong representation from overseas. Another advantage of California is the high concentration of instrument and biotechnology companies which certainly helped in terms of local support. A final factor is that the meeting theme continues to be in an innovative field, with a healthy involvement of university research groups. This was evident by a large student involvement in the program. In addition, we are beginning to see the adoption of HPCE more widely in the pharmaceutical industry. The rather long lag time for acceptance of this new method reflects on the necessary conservatism of a regulated industry that places strong demands on ruggedness and reproducibility. The broadened theme, as well as continued strength in the HPCE field in academia and a enormous interest in capillary electrochromatography resulted in well attended lectures. The meeting set many records and left the delegates with the feeling that their discipline had left many years of active life.

Now some meeting statistics! The meeting had approximately 800 delegates who attended 103 oral presentations and some 350 posters in 5 busy days. The 3 workshops that were held on the weekend before were popular and we had for the first time the opening plenary on Sunday evening. The subsequent scientific program was of a high quality as you will see from the following publications, although it was intense with triple sessions except for the opening and closing plenaries. These plenaries were by Drs. Bob Austin (DNA sequencing in nanofabricated arrays), Csaba Horvath (capillary electrochromatography), John Yates (protein analysis by tandem mass spectrometry), Michael Ramsay (integrated microstructures for biochemical analysis) and Jim Jorgen-

sen (linear diode array detection for CZE). Not surprisingly with the west coast location, the meeting had many interesting abstracts from biotechnology scientists as well as a large exhibition of the latest scientific instrumentation.

So HPCE'97 is over and this volume of the *Journal of Chromatography A* will be an important record of the meeting to supplement our many happy memories of the wonderful group of delegates. Such a meeting is only successful because of a lot of hard work by many and so I end my report by thanking them on behalf of all of the delegates. I look forward

to seeing many of them at HPCE'98 which will be held in Orlando from 31 January to 5 February. With Drs. Barry Karger and Salvatore Finali as the chairmen I know it will be a great success. As a sign of the vigor of the meeting series there will be an additional mid-term meeting in Kyoto in June 1997 with Dr. Shigera Terabe as the chairman. Clearly the practitioners of this exciting new field have much to look forward in the next decade.

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