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Journal of Chromatography A, 842 (1999) 1

JOURNAL OF
CHROMATOGRAPHY A

Foreword

The rapid development of gas chromatography in the 1950s ushered in the modern era of instrumental separation techniques. The general theory laid down for gas chromatography pointed the way for the subsequent evolution of the various forms of modern chromatography in use today. Compared to other chromatographic techniques gas chromatography may be old but it is not tired! Nor can any of these more recent developments replace it for the separation of thermally stable and volatile compounds. The spotlight always seems to shine brightest on the newest addition to the family of chromatographic techniques and can render the false impression that older techniques are imperfect or redundant. Those who think this way about gas chromatography do so at their peril. No other chromatographic technique is more efficient, faster, more robust, more reliable, or more delightful to use. For any problem that can be solved by gas chromatography I see no need to use any other technique but gas chromatography!!! For those that cannot, that is unfortunate, but is the basic reason why we have, and need, a family of separations techniques.

In these volumes we have tried to capture authoritative articles and reviews on recent advances in gas chromatography. The technique is now so widely applied that we could only provide a flavor of its breadth of penetration into academic and industrial problem solving. Most modern developments may turn out to be redevelopments with enhancements befitting today's technology, but this is how our science grows, in small steps after the giant strides of initiation. Thus we sought out updates on fast separations, comprehensive multidimensional separations, detector technology, the curses of modern integrators, and stationary phase chemistry, etc. Our efforts, incomplete as they are, we hope provide a contemporary picture of a vibrant and expanding field that can serve as a basis for a timely survey and springboard for future developments.

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