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Journal of Chromatography A

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/chroma

Foreword

Times are changing. The International Symposium on Capillary Chromatography (ISCC) and the GC \times GC Symposium as well as the International Symposium on Microscale Bioseparations (MSB) are each well known in the separation community as individual meetings. However, the last edition of these meetings, held at Town and Country Resort and Convention Center in San Diego, CA on May 1–5, 2011, was different. Why? Because all three were, for the first time combined in the 1st Joint Congress 2011. This new format with three parallel tracks was designed by CASSS, the organizer, in order to facilitate discussions among scientists from complementary areas of the separation science. The Joint Congress started on Sunday morning with a GC \times GC short course and in late afternoon with MSB plenary lectures presented by David Schwartz and Barry Karger. The parallel sessions of MSB and GC \times GC filled the Monday program. ISCC then started on Tuesday morning with presentation of the Marcel Golay award, sponsored by PerkinElmer, to Paul Haddad (University of Tasmania, Australia) for his pioneering work in ion chromatography. Following plenary lectures were given by Gert Desmet, Brett Paull, and Janusz Pawliszyn. Tuesday afternoon, Wednesday all day, and Thursday morning were dedicated to oral presentations in parallel sessions. Thursday afternoon then featured plenary lectures in both MSB (Lloyd Smith, Juan Santiago, Rong Zeng) and ISCC tracks (Koji Otsuka, Milton Lee), followed by a joint plenary session for all attendees that included lectures of Milos Novotny and Gerard Rozing. The rich program of the congress included a total of 75 invited lectures, 3 workshops and short courses, and 158 posters. The attendance of the 1st Joint Congress 2011 was 332.

One of the most positive aspects of the congress was the presence of 85 students – demonstrating that the new generation is active. Out of these, 18 students were given the opportunity for oral presentations in three parallel Young Scientists sessions where they presented their exciting results. These sessions – already becoming a tradition – are very popular and the presenters are always very well prepared. It was not any different this time.

The opinion of all attendees I spoke with was that this Joint Congress was a good idea and that the science emerging from the meetings is showing exciting advancements in variety of fields comprising capillary chromatography and electrophoresis, comprehensive techniques, micro- and nanofluidic separations in bioanalysis, and this in combination with sampling techniques and hyphenated systems. Significant attention was also paid to proteomics, glycomics, monitoring biomolecules and their interactions, and advanced modes of detection. Despite all the progress presented at the meeting, interesting challenges remain to be solved in the years to come. This was emphasized during the panel discussion that always accompanies the ISCC meetings in USA. The discussion entitled “Expectations for future GC systems” was held on Wednesday late afternoon and moderated by Milton Lee with a panel including Hans-Gert Janssen, Brian Jones, Jim Luong, and Stan Sterns. The intense discussion brought in very interesting ideas and opinions from people representing both academia and industry.

The scientific program was spiced with a rich social program that included a poolside welcome reception, the exhibitor and poster reception, and the highly praised evening at the Wave House at Mission Beach.

I would like to thank all attendees for making the meetings once again very successful and the exhibitors and sponsors for their continuous support. Finally, I want to extend my appreciation to the editors of Journal of Chromatography A and all the reviewers for their hard work while putting together this issue. And for your information, the 36th ISCC meeting and the 9th GC \times GC meeting co-chaired by Luigi Mondello and Pat Sandra will be held in Riva del Garda, Italy on May 27–June 1, 2012.

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Available online 9 December 2011