

Editorial 2003: Year Four

As *Organic Letters* begins its fifth year, the Associate Editors and I would again like to thank our authors, reviewers, and readers for their interest, suggestions, and support during our formative years. The launch of a new journal, especially in a time of rising costs and reduced library budgets, brings great risk. The ACS, in conjunction with the Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), was willing to take on this new enterprise to provide *at reasonable cost* a high visibility venue for authors to report exciting and timely research in the broad field of organic chemistry. Importantly, the organic community has embraced the value of *Organic Letters*. Your strong support is evidenced both by your willingness to trust us with your very best research results and by your agreement to provide careful, thoughtful evaluations of the manuscripts that *Organic Letters* receives. In large part, the high quality of *Organic Letters* is due to the critical analysis, energy, and expertise of our reviewers. The Associate Editors and I truly appreciate that so many of you, who are burdened with many other important responsibilities, are willing to provide timely and comprehensive reviews. Thank you!

Your trust and efforts have paid off. According to ISI's Citation Reports, *Organic Letters* is now one of the highest impact primary journals in organic chemistry, second only to *The Journal of Organic Chemistry*. Exciting results in all areas of organic chemistry, including bioorganic and medicinal chemistry, physical and theoretical organic chemistry, natural products isolation and synthesis, new synthetic methods, and organometallic and materials chemistry can be found in each new issue. Moreover, our impact factor in only the second year of rating has increased by nearly 10%. Equally impressive, our growth rate (number of manuscripts received) for the past two years has also increased nearly 10% per year. Volume 4 will contain 1189 Letters in 4800 pages from 32 countries. ***Organic Letters* is "exactly where you want to be!"**

The Associate Editors and I continue to search for ways to improve the quality of *Organic Letters*, and we welcome suggestions. As you will notice in the 2003 Guidelines for Authors (pp 10A-14A in this issue), we have significantly expanded our discussion of the data which should be provided when new procedures or new compounds are described. We continue to search for the correct balance between facilitating rapid disclosure of key elements of a

study and providing the most reliable and well-documented methods in the chemical literature. From all reports, the community is highly supportive of our efforts to bring you highly reliable experimental protocols. To this end, we again request that when authors provide new synthetic procedures, they fully describe the details, preferably in the Supporting Information, that the new compounds are characterized by appropriate spectroscopic methods, that a criterion of purity is provided for all compounds for which a yield is reported, and that proper descriptions of the methods used and the results obtained for analysis of stereochemical compositions are included.

To enhance the presentation of reaction schemes, we have received recommendations from the community that authors be urged to include reagents and conditions over reaction arrows, and not place conditions in scheme legends, except when the additional information is required to improve understanding. The Associate Editors and I concur with this recommendation, and we will strongly encourage this practice.

The Publications Division of the ACS also continues to explore and develop new Web technologies to facilitate rapid publication without sacrificing quality. For example, in 2002, the ACS introduced the Paragon system for authors and reviewers. *Organic Letters*, one of the first to use the Paragon system, initiated this Web enhancement in October. Early reports indicate that the ability to track papers via a personal home page has been widely welcomed by the community. The ACS Publications infrastructure has also been significantly enhanced in 2002 to ensure reliable, fast Web submission and as prelude to introducing a state-of-the-art publication system to improve the entire ACS sequence of publishing functions, including management and tracking of manuscripts in the editorial offices as well as production and composition. We again call your attention to the HTML versions of *Organic Letters* papers which contain links from article references to full text or abstracts and to features such as 3-D structures or executable programs. As readers and authors, we encourage you to explore and use these new and enhanced features.

In addition to quality, another hallmark of *Organic Letters* is rapid publication. Toward this end, we are constantly fine-tuning our processing procedures to ensure that manuscripts proceed from step to step as quickly as possible. Critical

here is the fast response of our authors and reviewers to requests for reviews (a speedy 'no' to a request to review allows us to quickly consider alternative reviewers), to submission of timely reviews, and to rapid turnaround of both requested revisions and page proofs. Currently, our average time from receipt to initial decision (revise or reject) is 24 days, with 36 days to accept. Authors can ensure that their manuscripts will be considered for review promptly by having the text *carefully* edited, if English is not their first language; by using standard fonts specified in the *Organic Letters* manuscript templates; and by providing good quality spectra in the Supporting Information. Absence of attention to these issues will cause significant delays in the review process.

Finally, I must report that beginning in 2003 Professor Cindy Burrows, one of our Founding Associate Editors, will be focusing her considerable skills completely on her position as Senior Editor for the *Journal of Organic Chemistry* and, thus, will be leaving the Editorial Staff of *Organic Letters*.

All of us in the chemical community owe Cindy our sincere thanks for her most valuable service and innovation as we designed and then implemented the new *Organic Letters* enterprise. We are, however, extremely fortunate that Professor Karl Hale, University College, London, has agreed to join *Organic Letters* as an Associate Editor in July 2003. Karl brings to four the number of international Associate Editors and significantly enhances our exposure both in the United Kingdom and Europe. Professor Hale will bring considerable expertise in the areas of natural products synthesis, new synthetic methods, and carbohydrate chemistry. We welcome Karl to *Organic Letters* and look forward to working with him in the coming years.

Finally, as we enter the second half of our first decade, the Editors and I again thank all of you for your trust and support. Please be assured that we will always welcome your comments and suggestions for improving the quality of *Organic Letters*.

Amos B. Smith, III

Editor-in-Chief

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