

## Editorial 2008

### A Milestone Year for *Organic Letters*

**How Time Flies!!!!** The year 2008 marks the 10th anniversary of the launch of *Organic Letters*, the then new American Chemical Society journal focused on the rapid dissemination of state-of-the-art organic chemistry broadly based. With tremendous gratitude to the Chemical Community, I am pleased to report, as foreshadowed in my inaugural *Organic Letters* 1999 Editorial, that this venture is indeed providing an exciting international forum for important research results in all areas of organic chemistry, including organometallic and materials chemistry, physical and theoretical organic chemistry, natural products isolation and synthesis, new synthetic methods, and bioorganic and medical chemistry. Indeed, during the past 10 years, *Organic Letters* has published more than 10,000 Letters, received more than 100,000 citations, placing *Organic Letters* among the top 10 journals in Organic Chemistry, and achieved a current ISI impact factor of 4.66. Certainly all of us at *Organic Letters* and the ACS Publications Division are extremely proud of these accomplishments, but clearly the true credit goes to the Chemical Community for strongly embracing the goals we set forth in 1999 for *Organic Letters*. As stated then, and is ever more true today:

*“This is indeed exactly where you want to be!”*

These achievements and milestones provide an excellent opportunity to reflect on the past, to assess our progress, and to plan for the future. In 1999, the Publication Division of the American Chemical Society, in collaboration with SPARC (the Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition), committed to the development of a new Letters journal in Organic Chemistry to attract the best research in all areas of the discipline. Central to this enterprise was the challenge of providing rapid publication, exploiting the then evolving web environment to facilitate manuscript submission, review, and production, while at the same time maintaining a subscription cost that was low, especially compared to existing non-societal journals. This was a bold move on the part of the ACS in an era of ever shrinking library budgets. To succeed at that time, *any* new journal would require high impact, strong support from the publish-

ing community, and clear value to a highly discerning constituency. Pleasingly these goals have been achieved!

Of course, we at *Organic Letters* have been fortunate on many fronts in our efforts to provide a rapid, highly visible publishing forum that the community would accept and value. Our founding Associate Editors provided exceptional expertise, vision and enthusiasm for this new project, as well as the Herculean efforts required to launch *Organic Letters*. My very special thanks goes to this early group, as well to our current Associate Editors and their very capable and hard working staff, who on a day to day basis make *Organic Letters* “the best that it can be!”.

#### Organic Letters Editors - Past and Current (founding editors in red, current editors in blue)

Beak, Peter  
Burrows, Cynthia  
Carreira, Erick  
Cossy, Janine  
Denmark, Scott  
Hale, Karl  
Holmes, Andrew  
Komatsu, Koichi  
Liu, Hung-wen

Lubell, William  
Molander, Gary  
Nakamura, Eiichi  
Poulter, C. Dale  
Rich, Daniel  
Smith, Amos (& current)  
Stoddart, J. Fraser  
Winkler, Jeffrey (& current)  
Vederas, John

We also thank the inaugural Members of our Editorial Advisory Board, who were willing and eager to lend their names and support to this new venture by providing outstanding literature contributions, as well as welcomed advice and counsel. *Organic Letters* also benefited tremendously from the expertise, commitment, and collegial spirit of the ACS Publications Division, under the capable guidance of Cheryl Shanks, the *Organic Letters* Launch Leader. At every step of the launch, they were enthusiastic, responsive, and patient proponents of the project, often dealing with an overzealous, and yes, sometimes brash new Editor-in-Chief.

A clear hallmark of the launch of *Organic Letters* was the design and introduction by the ACS Publications Division of their first web-based system to facilitate the electronic submission and review process. *Organic Letters* also ben-

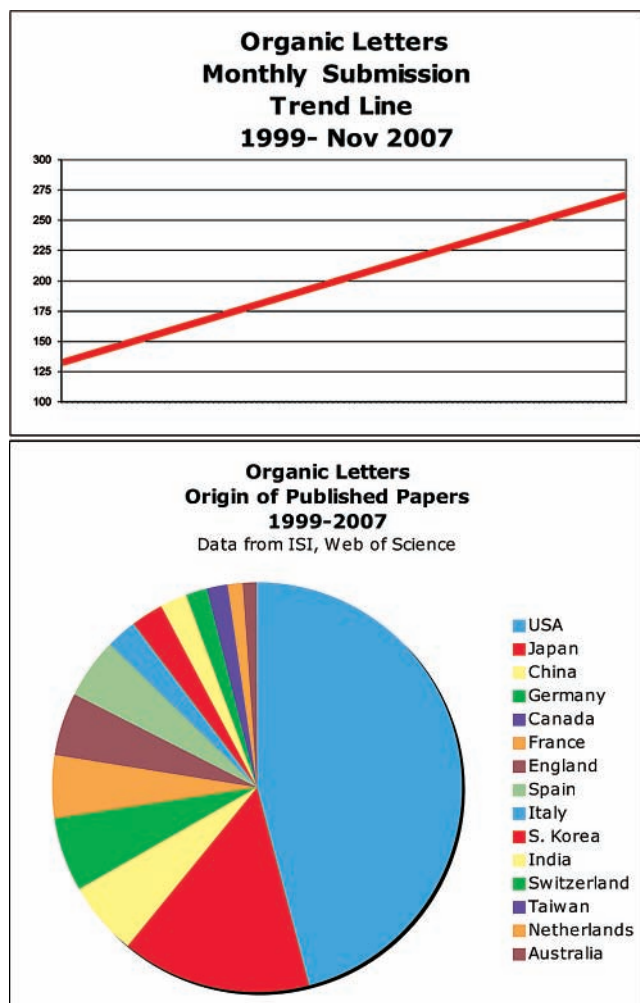


Figure 1.

edited from the wisdom and leadership of Professor Clayton Heathcock, the then Editor-in-Chief of *The Journal of Organic Chemistry*, who, in conjunction with the Associate Editors and members of *The Journal of Organic Chemistry* Editorial Advisory Board, generously agreed to discontinue publication of their high impact *Journal of Organic Chemistry* Communications, directing this distinguished group of authors to *Organic Letters*. The continuing close association with the *Journal of Organic Chemistry*, under the able leadership of Editor-in-Chief Professor Dale Poulter and his Associate Editors, is also highly valued. Of course, a very special thanks goes to the authors in the Chemical Community who trusted *Organic Letters* early on with their important manuscripts in our first years of publication. Finally, I along with my current and past Associate Editors of *Organic Letters* wish to thank Carol Carr, our Managing Editor, for taking on, from the very beginning, ownership of this project. Without her wide range of day-to-day leadership and counsel, the accomplishments of *Organic Letters* would simply not have been possible.

We as a scientific community also, *as always*, owe a huge debt of gratitude to our reviewers. Although these contributions are anonymous, these efforts are of fundamental

importance in ensuring added value to each high impact manuscript we publish. Peer review is, in large part, directly related to the quality of *Organic Letters* by providing essential improvements to each accepted manuscript. Almost 3500 reviewers provided expert evaluations of our manuscripts last year, many regularly answering our call for service. To you we give a very special "Thanks!" Of course, as with all journals, we encounter a number of highly visible authors who are less forthcoming with their service. To those, we remind them of their community responsibilities and extend to them an invitation to participate in the critical review process in the future.

As we launched the publication of *Organic Letters*, we did indeed stand on the shoulders of giants. I am happy to report that, thanks to their efforts and to the support of the community, *Organic Letters* is thriving as we move to Volume 10. Submissions continue to increase, emanating from a wide distribution of countries (Figure 1). Currently nearly 60% of the accepted manuscripts originate from outside of the United States; thus, *Organic Letters* is truly an international, rapid communications journal publishing high impact research.

As mentioned, our ISI impact factor continues to increase, now at 4.66. Moreover, the use of the *Organic Letters* web site continues to rise. In October 2007, our Letters were accessed almost 350,000 times from our home page (Figure 2).

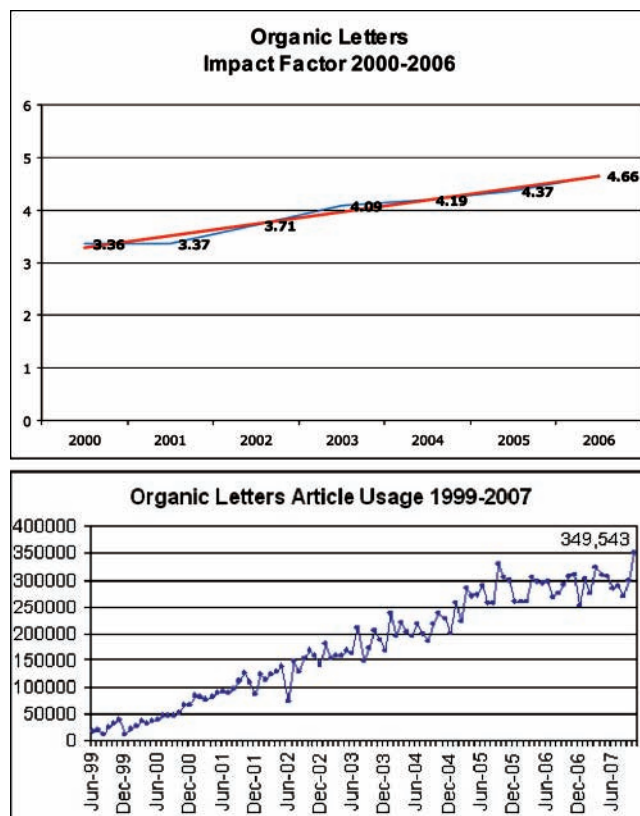


Figure 2.

The last 10 years have also seen exceptional advances in Organic Chemistry. Major contributions continue to arise in the area of complex molecule total synthesis of both natural and unnatural products having significant bio-regulatory properties. Outstanding contributions in organometallic and organocatalysis have also provided much recent excitement to the chemical community, along with an increasing interest in “green” chemistry, novel natural products, and materials chemistry, particularly with the evolution of innovative molecular machines. Bioorganic and medicinal chemistry, including new approaches to library synthesis and the use of “click” chemistry continue to foster a better understanding of biomolecular mechanism and process. *Organic Letters* is truly proud to have provided a forum for this information. To keep abreast of the “hot topics” in organic chemistry one can simply click on the ‘Most Accessed Papers’ link on the *Organic Letters* home page. This web publishing feature provides a wonderful broad based snapshot of organic chemistry as our science continues to achieve new heights of excellence.

Particularly noticeable during the past 10 years, journal publication has rapidly evolved from a paper-driven to an electronic process. *Organic Letters* was the first ACS journal to adopt electronic submission and review: other journals followed shortly. The tedious process of stuffing four copies of a manuscript along with the Supporting Material, as it was then known, into an express mail envelope will soon only be a faint memory. Major changes in the ACS electronic publishing environment have also been seen in the past year. All 37 ACS journals have now moved from an aging, outmoded system to a new state-of-the-art submission and tracking system, known as ACS Paragon Plus. This venture included the gargantuan task of migrating the past data for each journal to the new electronic environment; a significant achievement indeed! We look forward to the continued evolution and improvement of ACS Paragon Plus as we move forward. We thank the community for their patience during this now complete transition.

The electronic environment has and will continue to facilitate enhancements and improvements in publishing our science. By utilizing the attributes of the web, the time from submission to acceptance and publication is greatly shortened. Most significantly, the web has become the clear method of choice for all of us to “keep up with the literature”. I quite often hear from readers within hours of a paper appearing on the web. The ability to review ASAP abstracts with a Blackberry is but one example of this truly remarkable revolution! Enhanced SI such as movies depicting a reaction mechanism or executable programs in computational chemistry is now easily achievable. We certainly encourage all authors to explore and utilize these new vehicles to present their exciting work. *Organic Letters* is fully searchable by author and keyword and includes enhanced citations which can be easily downloaded to a variety of Citation Management tools. In the html version, citations are also linked to abstracting services, with references to ACS journals linked to the full text of the paper, assuming that you and/or your institution subscribes to the web version.

These achievements, however, only represent the beginning! In 2008, the ACS will be introducing an enhanced web platform for the journal home pages. Features will include advanced search and filtering tools along with links to related papers (e.g., “people who read this article also read ...”). PDF files will also contain live links to the references in a paper.

From all of us at *Organic Letters*, thank you for your continuing support; we are privileged to publish your work. Be assured that we do not plan to rest on our accomplishments but will continue to take every possible advantage of evolving technology to enhance and facilitate publication of exciting new chemistry. We also commit to refine and define our standards of excellence to ensure that the high quality of research that you value continues to be the hallmark of *Organic Letters*.

**Amos B. Smith, III**

*Editor-in-Chief*  
December 27, 2007

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