

FUNG'S CORNER

A Fond Farewell

I always have a difficult time saying “good-bye” to family members, relatives, friends, colleagues, students, and even to my dogs, cats and fish, even though in many cases I will see them again at a later time. But then life is uncertain, as there were many cases the good-byes were final. I am a sentimental soul, too full of nostalgia and memories of things gone by. I wish I never have to say good-bye to people, things and events, but then some wonderful things will leave me and I will remember them forever.

In this case, I am saying good-bye to the *Journal of Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology*, a journal I conceived, loved and nurtured for more than 15 years.

I have been working in the field of rapid methods and automation in microbiology since 1965, when I was a Master of Science in Public Health graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I carried the ideas and concepts to Iowa State University for my Ph.D., and later as an assistant professor at the Pennsylvania State University in the 1970s. Eventually I ended up at Kansas State University in 1978, moved up the ranks and have never left.

There are many journals in Microbiology- and Food Science-related areas, but there was no journal specifically concentrated on rapid methods and automation in microbiology. Around 1990, I graduated a large number of students at the same time and had a collection of research papers related to rapid methods in applied microbiology ready for publication. It dawned on me that there should be a journal on rapid methods in the field and approached Mr. John O’Neil, publisher of the Food and Nutrition Press, and suggested that I would like to start a new journal named *Journal of Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology*.

He thought it was a good idea and that the *Journal of Food Safety (JFS)* would be a good journal to “test the water.” Dr. Thomas J. Montville and Dr. Arthur J. Miller, the coeditors, agreed to give this idea a trial, and we published a Special Issue on *Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology* in Vol. 11, issue no. 3 of *JFS* in 1991. The results were favorable, and thus led to the creation of the *Journal of Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology (JRMAM)*, Vol. 1, issue no. 1 in March 1992, with me as the Editor and Dr. Millicent C. Goldschmidt, an automation expert at University of Texas, Houston, as Associate Editor.

The *JRMAM* steadily moved along and published many volumes concerning a large array of conventional and state-of-the-art microbiological methods by young and experienced authors from around the world. The

editorial board consisted of scholars from many areas in the U.S.A. as well as in several countries. At one point, I actually provided participants of my long-running Kansas State University Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology Workshop with a 1-year free subscription of the *JRMAM*. When Mr. O'Neil decided to retire, he sold many of his journals to Wiley-Blackwell in 2005, which included the *JRMAM*. The quality of the printing and paper improved dramatically and the distribution also widened.

Due to increased workload in my profession, I invited my former student, Dr. Dong Hyun Kang, an innovative and energetic young assistant professor at Washington State University, to serve as the Assistant Editor in 2003, and eventually I handed over the *JRMAM* to Dr. Kang in 2008 when he became the Editor; I became the Senior Associate Editor and Dr. Goldschmidt became the Associate Editor.

The most successful activity we three worked on together was the collection of excellent research and review papers generated from the 2006 International Workshop on Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology, which was the 26th workshop in the series, started in 1981. There were 12 excellent papers in many topics related to nanotechnology and rapid methods which were published in 2007. In hindsight, we should have published those papers as a book.

Wiley-Blackwell, in their long-term strategic planning, decided to terminate the *Journal of Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology* after Vol. 17, issue no. 4, the journal you are holding in your hands.

It is hard to say good-bye, but such is life. I want to thank the Food and Nutrition Press for having started this journal, and I thank Dr. Goldschmidt and Dr. Kang for working with me, all the great authors through these years, the superb staff at Food and Nutrition Press and Wiley-Blackwell for their expertise in making the *JRMAM* a first-class production, and of course all the readers and supporters of the *JRMAM* for all these years.

I have all the volumes bound and I will look at this handsome collection and will remember all the hundreds and thousands of hours I put in to making this journal as best as I can. I will look at the collection with pride and joy, for it truly has been an honor to have started this project, and now see it rest on my bookshelf for me to cherish the memories.

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Founder and Inaugural Editor, 1992

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