

# Commentary

## The Return of the Commentary

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*Editor*

As I proceed midway through my third year as editor of *Nuclear Technology* (*NT*), I would like to reinitiate the practice of including a commentary as an integral part of the journal. The history of this journal is very fascinating: it was born in 1965 as the second peer-reviewed, archival journal of the American Nuclear Society (ANS) following the venerable *Nuclear Science and Engineering*, which came into being in March 1956. *NT* started out under the title *Nuclear Applications*. This name was selected in order to avoid any potential confusion with another journal of the time, titled *Canadian Nuclear Technology*, which apparently was short-lived and has slipped into the depths of history. The title for the second ANS journal then evolved into *Nuclear Applications and Technology* in July 1969 (Volume 7, Number 1), and it has been known simply as *Nuclear Technology* ever since January 1971 (Volume 10, Number 1).

At the very beginning of *NT*'s history, the editors published a commentary in each issue. The founding editor of *NT*, Louis G. Stang, Jr., intended the commentary pages to be "devoted to serious essays about subjects important to the nuclear profession." The list of commentary authors includes many of the luminaries of the nuclear science field. The very first guest commentary was written by Glenn Seaborg, who at the time was the chairman of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, on his optimistic outlook on the future of the atom and the peaceful applications of nuclear technologies. Eugene Wigner and Edward Teller followed later in 1965 with commentaries on civil defense (this was the height of the Cold War, after all) and the importance of advanced education and training in the applied sciences, respectively. Additional commentaries were authored by Leland Haworth, Director of the National Science Foundation; Sigvard Ecklund, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency; Alvin Weinberg, Director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory; Sherwood Fawcett, Director of the Pacific Northwest Laboratories of Battelle Memorial Institute; Norman

Hillberry, Director of Argonne National Laboratory and President of ANS at the time he wrote his commentary; and many others.

All told, 44 commentaries have been published in *NT* with the editors generating 28 of them and guest commentators the rest. The topics cover a wide range of subjects, from the profound to the informative, and are worth going back and reviewing for their historical coverage of the important issues of the day, some of which remain, surprisingly, concerns of today. Editor Roy Post's final commentary in December 1969 in Volume 7, Number 6 was concerned with "resolving serious conflicts between enjoyment of the material benefits of our technology and disturbance of the 'natural' environment." While Dr. Post did not pose any particular solutions to the problem, his primary point remains true today that the importance of "the price we are willing to pay in disturbance or consumption of the natural environment can best be resolved only in an atmosphere of reason and truth."

I plan to bring back the use of the commentary as an irregular opening feature of future issues of *NT*. Some of the commentaries will be authored by the editor and associate editors on various topics of the day, but we will also attempt to recruit guest commentators from the leaders from our nuclear technology communities.

Through the years, *NT* has remained true to its identity of "reporting on new information in all areas of the practical application of nuclear science." Since 1965 through the end of 2017 there have been a total of six editors who have published 200 volumes, 617 individual issues, and 7358 distinct papers. It is my wonderful opportunity to continue this proud heritage, and I look forward to growing the impact and presence of *NT* by regularly delivering high-quality, peer-reviewed papers to our readers and by providing our authors with a valuable place to publish and discuss their important research and development activities. I also greatly anticipate *NT* being a well-used platform for the free flow of and

conversations related to peer-reviewed technical information and data to build the next generation of “nuclear applications and technologies” for the benefit of humankind.

Finally, as we move forward with the rich legacy of *NT*, I also hope that, as Louis Stang anonymously quoted

in the very first issue of *Nuclear Applications* as he laid out the direction for the journal,

“With sufficient thought, care, and hard work everything we do can be of such high quality as to constitute a standard of excellence worthy of emulation by others.”