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Passing the torch

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7z93s4ss>

Journal

Indoor Air, 28(4)

ISSN

0905-6947

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Publication Date

2018-07-01

DOI

10.1111/ina.12467

Peer reviewed

Passing the Torch

The Indoor Air 1984 conference was held in Stockholm. It was noteworthy in several respects. Although that conference is now recognized as the third in the series, it is the first use the “Indoor Air” title. The three organizers are among the most distinguished scholars in our field. Birgitta Berglund, Thomas Lindvall, and Jan Sundell were founding members of the International Academy of Indoor Air Sciences (IAIAS), established in 1991. (IAIAS now functions as the Academy of Fellows in the International Society of Indoor Air Quality and Climate, ISIAQ.) Birgitta Berglund was the first Secretary/Treasurer of IAIAS (1991-1993) and also served as Vice President (1993-1996). Thomas Lindvall was the first recipient of the Max von Pettenkofer Award (in 1999). Jan Sundell was Vice President (2002-2005) and then President (2002-2005) of the Academy. He was the second editor-in-chief of *Indoor Air* (2000-2010). Jan Sundell is the fifth recipient of the Pettenkofer Award (in 2011).

Indoor Air 1984 also marked the beginning of a tradition to take a mid-week half-day break from formal conference activities with “Indoorers Go Out” events. These events have taken on different forms at subsequent Indoor Air conferences. However, one frequent component, pioneered in 1984, is a “fun run,” typically of 3-5 km distance. Notwithstanding that “fun run” is an oxymoron for many, the participation rate is high. The most gifted runners in our community take the challenge seriously. (Running is more fun if you win!) At Indoor Air 1984, the fun run started and ended in the Olympic Stadium, built for Stockholm’s 1912 games. Remarkably, the organizers made arrangements for flags to be flown that represented the many countries of conference attendees. The winner of that race was Charlie Weschler, one of many accomplished runners in our community.

The Los Angeles Olympic Games were held shortly before the Indoor Air 1984 conference. In the three months preceding these games, the Olympic Torch Relay traversed a winding 15,000 km route from New York to Los Angeles. Charlie Weschler participated as one of the runners in this relay, on the segment between Sacramento and Los Angeles. He writes, “Each week there was a group of 16 core runners. Each of us ran the torch for a 4-mile stretch twice a day. ... The torch weighed a bit more than 4 lbs. with its full load of fuel. ... We almost always fell behind schedule when we went through cities This meant that the organizers were repeatedly asking the core runners to try and make up time on their 4-mile legs.”

Charlie goes on to describe the relay: “We each had our own torch We would be driven ahead of the current runner and stand by the side of the road waiting When the runner was close, we would open the flow of butane, light our torch from theirs and speed off. ... As my segments would be drawing to a close, I was often looking anxiously for the next runner. It was just like looking for the finish line in a race. ... You are tired, your lungs are gasping for more air, your legs have gotten heavy, the torch weighs a ton. You light the next runner’s torch. You stand by the side of the road, gasping, and looking at a pair of fresh legs carrying the flame up the road....”

The torch relay had an impressive support system, with four recreation vehicles (RVs) “... for the 16 core runners. ... We rode in the RV during the day when it wasn’t our turn to run. ... [Also] the runner had a lead vehicle in front and was followed by a security vehicle and an EMS (Emergency Medical Services) truck.”

In many ways, the Olympic Torch Relay is a fitting metaphor for the responsibility of editing an archival journal like *Indoor Air*. Having run the third leg of our relay (following David Grimsrud and Jan Sundell), it's time for me to pass the flame to the torch of our next Editor-in-Chief, Yuguo Li. Together, we are serving as co-Editors-in-Chief for the remainder of 2018, with Yuguo assuming full responsibility in January 2019.

Yuguo Li is eminently qualified to be Editor-in-Chief of *Indoor Air*. He earned his PhD (1992) in Fluid Mechanics from the Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden. He worked as a research scientist for eight years at CSIRO, Australia, before joining the faculty of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Hong Kong. He was promoted to full professor in 2006 and has served as Head of Department. Since 2007, Yuguo has been an Associate Editor of *Indoor Air*. He currently serves as the President of ISIAQ's Academy of Fellows. He served as the conference president for the highly successful Indoor Air 2014 conference in Hong Kong. He introduced the innovation of featured keynote lectures at that conference; papers developed from these lectures populate a splendid special issue of *Indoor Air*, published in February 2016. I'm confident that the journal will continue to thrive under his leadership.

If you've read this far, then maybe you'll indulge this retrospective look at some of the highlights and changes for *Indoor Air* since the start of my term in 2010. As with most archival journals, we have made the transition from print to digital as the primary mode of distribution. We made sure during this transition that the full publication history of the journal was made available on-line. We've also seen the emergence of social media as a vehicle for spreading news about new publications; the Altmetric score and associated details page provide a summary for each article of the "buzz" it has generated.

Indoor Air's prominence in citation metrics has strongly improved. For the past four years, the journal's impact factor has been in the range 4.0-5.0 and that appears likely to continue for the soon-to-be-released 2017 numbers. Based on impact factors, *Indoor Air* ranks at the 96th percentile in "construction & building technology," 91st percentile in "public, environmental & occupational health," and 83rd percentile in "environmental engineering." This strong performance in citation statistics has been accompanied by a growth in journal size, from 48 citable articles in 2010 to 106 in 2017. That high number for year 2017 partially reflects real growth and partially reflects success to reduce the delay between article acceptance and publication. I'm pleased to report that there is no longer a meaningful delay so that articles are now appearing in their final published form no more than a few months after acceptance.

We are currently receiving about 300 new manuscript submissions per year, an increase of about 40% above the rate of submission in 2010. Throughout my term as editor-in-chief, we have selected for peer review about half of the submitted manuscripts and about half of those selected are ultimately published. The editorial standard that we have set and continue to maintain is that each accepted article should be clearly supported for publication by at least two peer reviewers. In addition, the editor who has managed the review process should recommend in favor of publication. All final manuscript disposition decisions are made by the Editor-in-Chief.

One of the best decisions that I made during these past years was to expand the team of journal Associate Editors. At its largest, we had 12 Associate Editors whose respective expertise spanned a quite broad range across many dimensions of the indoor air sciences. Having a relatively large pool of associate editors for a small journal allowed us to cap the workload for each to a maximum of 12 managed manuscripts per year. In turn, the manuscript management limit helped us recruit the top experts in respective areas of interest without needing to have people agree to unbounded large work assignments. Our standards for what should be published are remarkably consistent. In at least 90% of the cases, I accept an Associate Editor's recommendation without question. In the remaining cases, we are able to reach mutually agreeable resolutions with a quick exchange of elaborated reasoning. I especially thank Yuguo Li and Huey-Jen (Jenny) Su who have now served as Associate Editors for almost 12 years. I also very much appreciate the ongoing contributions of our other continuing AEs whose service began in 2013 or 2014: Bert Brunekreef, Geo Clausen, Rich Corsi, Glenn Morrison, Jordan Peccia, Tiina Reponen, Tunga Salthammer, and Junfeng (Jim) Zhang. I thank outgoing associate editors Bill Fisk (2013-2018) and Richard de Dear (2014-2016) for their contributions to the journal.

As with the Olympic Torch Relay, a large and strong support system is needed for smoothly functioning journal editorship. I warmly thank the three staffers with whom I have worked most closely: Lisbeth Cranfield, the publisher's representative for *Indoor Air*; Emma Missen, the editorial assistant; and Malathi Balamurugan, the production editor. Distance is clearly no longer a barrier for strong working relationships. Malathi works in India and Emma works in the UK. I've never met either of them face-to-face. Nevertheless, we have frictionless cooperation in support of operating a strong journal. I appreciate their professionalism, courtesy, and responsiveness. Lisbeth has been affiliated with *Indoor Air* for longer than I have and has effectively guided it through many changes. I especially appreciate that there has been a clear separation maintained between the publisher's business interests in the journal and the editors' primary concern with the scientific independence and integrity of what is published.

Ultimately, the success of *Indoor Air* relies on the strong support of the scientific and professional community concerned with indoor environmental quality and its relation to human health. On behalf of all of the editors, I thank you who have submitted your research manuscripts to be considered for publication and I thank you who have volunteered your time in service as peer reviewers evaluating the suitability of those manuscripts for publication. One of the pleasantries of the editorship is seeing how much stronger published articles become through the review and revision process. Even when we decide not to publish a manuscript, I hope that the authors find the evaluation process to be helpful in strengthening their research efforts, current and future.

It has been my privilege for almost nine years to carry the torch of the *Indoor Air* editorship. Now, metaphorically speaking, I am tired, my lungs are gasping for more air, my legs have gotten heavy, the torch weighs a ton. I have lit the next runner's torch. I stand by the side of the road ... looking at a pair of fresh legs carrying the flame up the road.

William W Nazaroff
Editor-in-Chief