

"Anticipation . . . is making me wait, keeping me waiting."

—Carly Simon, "Anticipation"

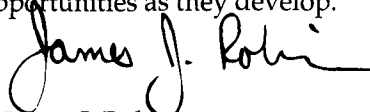
If we can tolerate the wait, analysts anticipate that the long-term outlook for aluminum is quite favorable. Through the mid-1990s, demand should eventually catch up with supply and prices should gradually rise. Sometime in this century, demand should begin to exceed capacity. Of course, it is difficult to think in such favorable terms as the processing side of the industry continues to contract because of the metal oversupply that is driving prices and production downward. Just as surely as there is a light at the end of the tunnel, there's an oncoming train at the opposite end. Only the producers that are lean, nimble, and fleet will emerge in the position needed to take advantage of the forecast market opportunities (e.g., supplying the increasingly weight-conscious automotive industry). Undoubtedly, the challenge to succeed in the coming months and years will remain formidable, and the wait will seem interminable.

Helping industry succeed in the face of its challenges is one of the roles TMS has to play as a professional society. To quote from the mission statement, TMS provides "forums for the exchange of information among all segments of our professional community" and promotes "technology transfer and, thereby, the economic health of our industries." It works to satisfy these goals in a number of ways, including publications, meetings, short courses, and TMS OnLine (where it is possible, from the comfort of one's computer, to exchange messages with members of the community as well as to conveniently find details on TMS meetings and publications).

As the primary publication of the society, *JOM* must fulfill the same responsibilities as its parent. Thus, it seems appropriate that as the aluminum industry is undergoing a troubled period, *JOM* has increased the depth and frequency of its coverage of the field. In fact, this issue marks the first anniversary of the journal incorporating a quarterly technical emphasis topic on aluminum processing and related issues. In honor of this anniversary, I believe we have assembled an issue that will be of practical value to not only the light metals community but many of the other fields comprising materials science and engineering.

Although this edition contains good coverage of biomaterials (courtesy of V.A. Ravi's contributions as advisor), what I am specifically referring to is the pairing of the topics on aluminum processing and automotive recycling. The topics are bridged by the second installment of a three-part series on the use of aluminum in automobile design, thereby creating something of a life-cycle perspective on at least one aspect of the use of the light metal. For those in the aluminum field, the issue articulates not only some noteworthy initiatives in aluminum reduction but also some of the factors that must be considered in the reclamation of spent materials from junked vehicles, which are becoming increasingly heterogeneous in composition. The articles help show how aluminum and other materials fit into this design equation—invaluable information if aluminum is to demonstrate greater inroads into the manufacture of automobiles. (The reduction articles come to *JOM* through our hard-working Aluminum Committee advisor, Wayne Hale, and the recycling papers were arranged by Pragna N.H. Bhakta of the Recycling Committee.)

Anticipating the arrival of a rebalanced aluminum market is helpful if the industry is to maintain a positive outlook through difficult times. Turning the wait into time well spent is vital if a business is to exploit opportunities as they develop.



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JOM is published monthly by The Minerals, Metals & Materials Society (TMS), 420 Commonwealth Drive, Warrendale, PA 15086. TMS is a member society of the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers, Inc. (AIME), 345 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017, Alfred Weiss, executive director. ©1994 by TMS ISSN: 1047-4838

Second class postage is paid at Warrendale, PA, and at additional mailing offices. Printed in the U.S.

Disclaimer: The opinions and statements expressed in *JOM* are those of the authors only and are not necessarily those of TMS or the editorial staff. No confirmations or endorsements are intended or implied.

Subscriptions: \$25 for members of AIME, \$50 for non-members, and \$90 for institutions. There is a \$15 postage surcharge for all subscriptions outside the U.S.

Single Copies: \$3 for members, \$6 for non-members, and \$12 for institutions. **Non-delivery:** Claims of non-delivery will be honored at no charge for 60 days on U.S. subscriptions and 120 days for all other areas. Afterward, single-issue charges are assessed.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *JOM*, 420 Commonwealth Dr., Warrendale, PA 15086; telephone (412) 776-9000

