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Från: Rein, Guillermo <g.rein@imperial.ac.uk>
Skickat: den 19 november 2012 19:06
Till: bogdan.dlugogorski@newcastle.edu.au
Kopia: Margaret Simonson McNamee
Ämne: Featured Articles and the Newsletter

Dear Bodzio,

I appreciate the skype conversation we had last week regarding the discussion that took place during the last IAFSS Committee meeting about the newsletter and in particular on the most recent series of featured articles. I would like to pass this short text to the Executive Committee so they are all aware of my views on this issue of the issue.

Last year I took the role of Editor of Fire Safety Science News, the newsletter of the IAFSS. Right after accepting the position, I set my editorial mission and aims to make the newsletter "a platform for spreading the work of IAFSS members, and be the place where fire safety scientists can read what is not readily found elsewhere, thus favoring news, trending research, opinions, and controversial topics on the field". These aims are written on the newsletter itself, right above the Editorial of the first few pages.

The three key tasks that I identified to fulfil these editorial aims were:

- 1) Form an editorial board with dynamic, engaging and wise people that agree with the aims
- 2) Make the newsletter exciting and appealing so it grows in readership size and richness of content
- 3) Introduce new instruments that allow an editorial strategy to take place

I will not talk about tasks 1 and 2 here. The "Featured Articles" section belongs to task 3: the editorial strategy. These articles are by invitation of the editor only. They typical are ~1000 in length and up to one or two figures. I usually identify a topic of high interest in fire science that is poorly discussed elsewhere and approach several authors that expert on the topic and are also good communicators. The featured articles were first introduced in No.31 issue, Aug 2011, with articles by Prof A. Sekizawa and M. Gollner. In No. 32, April 2012, the featured articles were by Prof V Brannigan and N Barlett. It was not until the last series of featured articles on flame retardants (No 33, Aug 2012) that concerns have been raised in the Committee about the editorial process leading to these articles. For your reference, at the end of this message I have added links to the online version of these issues.

Note that there is another section in the newsletter called simply "Articles", where any IAFSS member can contribute and there is no need to be invited by the editor. I have been blessed with a few of these submissions that I have very happily included in the three aforementioned issues. None of these treated the topic of flame retardants.

I am of the opinion that the recent concerns are not about the featured articles in general, but about the particular opinions that were expressed in the last series. Thus, I would like to separate the discussion of the two topics, and discuss on one side how to complement the views expressed in No. 33, from the discussion about my editorial mission.

To address the first issues (how to complement the views expressed in No. 33), I propose the following actions.

- Invite those who have raised concerns to propose to me a few authors I can approach and invite to write featured articles on the topic of flame retardants. This has been initiated already and I hope to start receiving suggestions soon. In case we find authors willing to write (this is by far the most difficult task of the IAFSS editor), this action will help to show the wider range of views on the topics present in the IAFSS.

- Highlight even more that "Letters to the Editor are most welcome, anytime, in response to articles, newsletter content or any other topic related to the IAFSS. Send it to the Editor-in-Chief <g.rein@imperial.ac.uk>" (this text is included in all issues but so far I have received no letters).

The work of an editor is especially hard in a silent association like the IAFSS which seemed to be rather shy of public view. Shutting down the key strategic element of the Featured Articles would hardly help reaching more engaging association, and would be a direct rejection of my editorial role.

Cheers

G.

Online versions of the newsletter since I am editor (Aug 2011):

No. 31: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/103717863/Newsletter-31-August-Final>

No. 32: <http://iafss-online.info/april-2012-newsletter-32>

No. 33: <http://iafss-online.info/august-2012-newsletter-published-fire-safety-science-news>

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"Knowing is not enough, we must apply. Willing is not enough, we must do" JW von Goethe