
From the Editor

Attending Events In-person Matters

Most of us have welcomed the opportunities to attend and participate in events like CastExpo last year, the

it? If you ask those who attended Metalcasting Congress in Cleveland, Ohio, or the recent Ductile Iron

really effective” at increasing the chance that researchers will cite the work,” says Misha Teplitskiy, an information scientist at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, “We know that face-to-face interactions in settings like conferences matter.”

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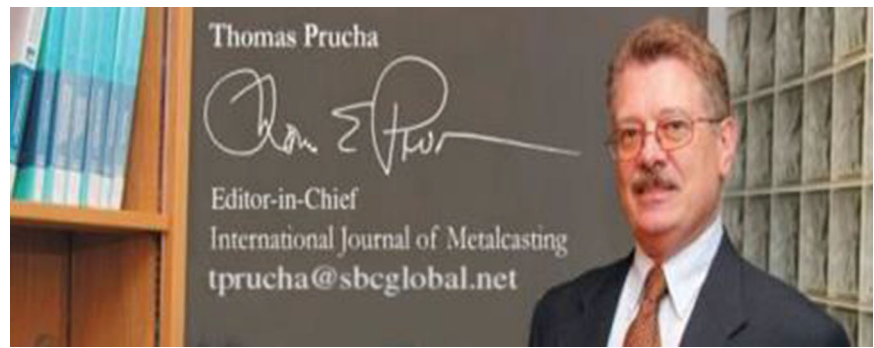
recently held Metalcasting Congress, meetings, seminars, and conferences in-person. The last three years have seen a plethora of virtual activities. As described in the 2021 IJMC Editorial “Virtual,” the adjective “virtual” became all too familiar to us. It is such a part of our everyday lexicon—used to describe everything from holiday gatherings, or perhaps non-gatherings, to conferences, etc. that many thought this was going to be the new norm moving forward. Then we migrated to hybrid meetings, which were a combination of in-person with virtual participation options. These last three years have taught us to be adaptable, reflective upon what works and what doesn’t, and hopefully teaching us to create and implement new approaches to these interactions.

So, does hosting and attending in-person events matter? Are they worth

Society Spring meeting in Fort Wayne, Indiana, most will shout an overwhelming yes. Virtual or hybrid events can offer some conveniences and opportunities for participation, but they are not a replacement for networking and attending a live event. But are the benefits measurable? Actually, these have been quantified, and the results published in a recent article by Katharine Sanderson in Nature, Vol 618, pp 15-16, 1 June 2023, “Do scientific meetings matter? Turning up for talks brings surprise benefits.” The article stated recent studies that found that scientists who have attended meetings are more likely to cite work discussed in talks they could see in person than results described in sessions that they could not attend. That citation bump from attendance accrues even for talks that conference goers hadn’t planned to listen to. Attending a talk is “really,

Not only did this effect relate to presentations and papers that participants had initially planned on attending, but also to those unplanned ones. Most of us have experienced looking at the program once we get to an event or maybe walking past a meeting room and deciding to go inside, often perhaps on a topic outside the normal ones we would attend and becoming exposed to new information. The attendees then relate that work to their colleagues and in the organizations. This is what is termed as “Serendipitous spread.” The same can be said for the networking between talks and walks and discussion on the show floor. During such an interaction at the AFS Metalcasting Congress while I was browsing the perimeter booths, I bumped into Rebecca Ward, Impact NDT, who I knew from an AFS Cast Iron Research Committee project from several years back. During our chat over beer at the Wednesday afternoon Exhibit Floor Reception I

was able to give an invitation for her to participate as a speaker for the upcoming Keith Millis Symposium. These types of chance encounters are only available in-person, so take advantage of them when you can and perhaps I will bump into you in Milwaukee next year.



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