

To Professor Alfred Klemm on the Occasion of his 100th Birthday



Alfred Klemm, a co-founder of the *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung*, celebrates his 100th birthday on February 15th, 2013. He is a scientific member emeritus of the Max Planck Institute of Chemistry in Mainz and former professor at the University of Mainz. In 1986 the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, awarded Alfred Klemm the honorary doctorate.

Alfred Klemm, then 32 years old and working at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Chemistry in Tailfingen, founded the *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung* together with Hans Friedrich-Freksa in 1946. The publisher was the Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung of his father Wilhelm Klemm, later to be succeeded by the Verlag der Zeitschrift für Naturforschung founded by Alfred Klemm.

In 1947 the *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung* was divided into two parts which were devoted to the physical sciences (Section A) and the chemical and biological sciences including biophysics (Section B). It was then only in 1973, that Section C was established for the biological sciences while Section B concentrated on chemistry. In *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung B – A Journal of Chemical Sciences*, as it is fully referred to now, papers are presented which describe the results of preparative, spectroscopic and structural studies in chemistry with a distinct element of novelty. This encompasses the classical fields of inorganic and organic chemistry including natural product chemistry.

Manuscripts dealing with analytical and theoretical aspects of chemistry are also considered provided they are of interest to the broad readership of the journal.

Founding a scientific journal in post-war Germany of 1946 certainly needed a high level of entrepreneurial spirit and courage as success was by no means guaranteed. Seen in the retrospect, the decisions of Alfred Klemm proved to be right, and all difficulties faced then and later were successfully overcome.

Although the present-day situation certainly cannot be compared with the founding years of *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung*, scientific publishing seems to be at the crossroads again. On the one hand, a growing number of scientific journals do not rely any longer on the subscriptions alone which are paid in academia mainly out of university budgets, but also on page charges to be paid by the authors. While this situation is quite common in the humanities, it is less widespread among the (natural) sciences.

On the other hand, open-access publishing has been much hailed recently as the future form of scientific publishing. It is paid entirely by the authors, or their respective funding sources, and it is strongly recommended by major scientific and funding organizations not only in Germany. Open-access publications are immediately available electronically free of charge to all readers with most of the publishing rights remaining in the hands of the authors. Especially in the biochemical

and biomedical field there are already several established high-impact open-access journals.

Following the arguments not only of the fiercest advocates of open-access publishing, one has the impression that they would even like to see the entire process of academic publishing in the hands of the scientists without the participation of (giant) publishing houses. Publishing as some sort of a grassroots movement certainly might appeal to many scientists. However, it is often forgotten that the organization of the entire publishing process, including peer reviewing, the preparation of a properly type-set manuscript file with an appealing layout, and the online hosting and archiving can only be done in a professional way.

The Verlag der Zeitschrift für Naturforschung is still family-owned, family-run and independent of large publishing houses. The *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung B* has established itself already as a hybrid journal

and thus offers open-access publishing and is open for other changes that will be necessary in the future.

After retiring from active duties as editor, Alfred Klemm maintained strong links with and a continuing interest in “his” journals. We, the editors and the editorial team of *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung B* would like to express our gratitude to Alfred Klemm for his life-long successful service to the scientific community. On the occasion of his 100th birthday we wish Alfred Klemm all the best for his golden years to come and continuing satisfaction and pride when seeing that his *Zeitschrift für Naturforschung* lives and prospers. His advice as *spiritus rector* is always welcome.

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