

FROM the EDITOR

Putting the Market in Perspective



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As is the case with most industries during these tumultuous economic times, many people are expecting the conference industry to show signs of a major decline at this year's 60th Pittsburgh Conference and Exposition, set to take place March 8–13, 2009 in Chicago, Illinois. Whether or not these predictions come to fruition remains to be seen, but as demonstrated in several other areas of the economy, whenever gloom-and-doom, apocalyptic predictions are made, they are rarely, if ever, fully realized.

What countless commentators have referred to as the “collapse” of the U.S. economy (at this writing, the most recent example being an AP inauguration story posted January 20), has not even approached reality. Just ask any relatives you might have who grew up in the 1930s. The 89% loss of the market's value from 1929 to 1932 was the true definition of a “collapse.” With the current DJIA record high at nearly 12,000, we would have to lose about 6,000 more points to approach this kind of genuine collapse — not likely in any economic prediction model. In short, if predictions about the conference industry's decline are as overstated as the other dire economic predictions we hear every day, Pittcon 2009 should do just fine in the end. This is not to say that records will be smashed or to somehow deny that the information age has changed the way the world does business. But adding a little rational thought and perspective to the discourse can never hurt, and this applies to the field of analytical chemistry as much as it does to any of the other markets going through this current period of uncertainty.

The staff of Spectroscopy, then, is looking forward to this year's conference more than ever. With a slew of press events to attend, and that once-a-year opportunity to network and see all of the colleagues we work with throughout the year in person, we are excited about the opportunities that will be present at what is still the premier event in the field of analytical chemistry.

Though the recent market instability would cause anyone to worry and will undoubtedly cause some changes, we are looking forward to a productive — and crowded — Pittcon 2009. We'll see you there.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Walsh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.