

A brief tribute to Mike Filosa, Editor of the Nucleus

By Katherine Lee, NESACS Board of Publications Chair and ACS District I Director



Photo taken in 2008 by Philip Tseng on the West Lake Causeway in Hangzhou, China.

Mike Filosa has been the Editor of *the Nucleus* since January 2005, and some of us have been fortunate enough to have the opportunity to hear Mike's story about how he assumed the mantle of this role from none other than Arno Heyn (NESACS Chair 1968, Henry Hill Award Winner 1986, Nucleus Editor 1989-2004).

As I have come to know Mike through the years, I have been impressed by his stewardship for the history of NESACS and his dedication to our Section and to the ACS as a whole. Perhaps you have attended a NESACS Board Meeting at which Mike gave an update on the latest issue of *the Nucleus* and passed around the proof so we could get a sneak peek of the contents. Perhaps you have been the recipient of a nudge from Mike, along the lines of, "It would be great if you could write up [name of event]" or "I need the announcement for the monthly meeting."

As Ajay Purohit, the 2019 Chair of the NESACS Board of Publications (BOP) notes, "*I think that what I remember most about Mike is his selfless devotion to NESACS and the work he did to continue Arno Heyn's legacy in the Nucleus.*"

A labor of love:

To put together up to 10 issues per year, amassing the content, and in many cases, writing articles in addition to editing submissions, is a demanding job; you may browse the issues edited by Mike here: https://www.nesacs.org/publications_nucleus.html

I would remind people that this is an unpaid position! Mindy Levine, 2018 NESACS Chair, offers these thoughts: “As a past-chair of NESACS and a former contributor to *the Nucleus*, I have been fortunate to work closely with Mike Filosa on a number of occasions. Mike’s encouragement to write articles for *the Nucleus* led me to write several first-person accounts of my early career trajectory as a female assistant professor and led me to explore a number of other topics of relevance to the NESACS community.

I have seen some of the hard work that Mike put in to this publication over the years, and can only imagine that what I have seen is a small fraction of the actual work that was required to keep this publication running as smoothly as it did for this extended period of time. Many thanks to Mike for his hard work, dedication, and service.”

Partnership and perfectionism:

Jim Piper, longtime NESACS Treasurer, offers his thoughts: “*I have served on the NESACS Board for the entire span of Mike’s editorship. In addition to being the major means of communication with members, the Nucleus serves as the major source of historical content for the Section. The Editor bears a great deal of responsibility for seeing that the events are accurately and faithfully recorded, and Mike has fulfilled these responsibilities admirably.*

However, my chief impetus for writing these comments comes from the long partnership my wife, Karen, had with Mike. It was a relationship of trust and mutual respect. Karen was business manager of the Nucleus for much of Mike’s term until she passed away in 2016. She was a perfectionist, and she appreciated Mike’s insistence on always producing a professional publication. For a quick view of the effort Mike put into this job, take a look at the 40-page 2010 and 2007 Summer issues. Mike’s contribution to the Section will remain embedded in the Section records and I count him among those who have most vigorously advanced its principals and goals.

Editor and change agent:

In 2015, when I was Chair-Elect of NESACS, I held a long-range planning meeting focused on coming to a recommendation on the future of *the Nucleus*. In partnership with Mike, we built a consensus to implement an opt-in policy for readers who wished to continue to receive a hard copy of *the Nucleus*. Mike’s buy-in was key to *the Nucleus* going green.

Colleague and friend:

Mukund Chorghade pipes up: *Tinker! Tailor!! Soldier!!! Spy!!!!* The moniker derived from *Le Carre's* famous novel can be easily applied to Michael Filosa, a talented and outstanding scientist, loyal friend, sage advisor and the quintessential scholar and a gentleman. He tinkers with the chemistry in his company and contributes to the Chemical Enterprise. He tailors the product properties to exacting specifications. He soldiers at the frontlines of NESACS for the professional development of scientists in the Section. As a spy, he gleans intelligence from the "happenings" in NESACS science and deciphers the talents of his colleagues for extracting the best from them. He has been a revered colleague and a consummate professional par excellence.

I am personally a huge fan of Michael Filosa's tenacity, drive, hard work and keen insights; these have been instrumental in propelling the Nucleus to new heights. I was, actually, the weak link and spacer in the transition of the Nucleus editorship from Arno Heyn to Michael. I shall always be proud and delighted to call him a friend. Uncommon modesty and humility are extremely common virtues with him. Many scientists in the NESACS community have been beneficiaries of his grace, generosity, and wisdom.

Mike as a mentor:

Mike is a respected "tribal elder" who shares his wisdom with others. Anna Sromek, 2020 NESACS Chair, shares the following: *"Mike is a genuinely good person. He is someone I look up to and I respect him a lot. One example I remember, when I first won an elected position and I was a bit nervous about it and I felt a bit vulnerable, Mike was the first person to come over to talk to me about it, and gave me confidence about my upcoming duties. It really meant a lot to me."*

Doris Lewis adds, *"Among the critical functions of the Northeastern Section are the nomination process and the recognition of the extraordinary service that members have performed over the years. With his knowledge and appreciation of Section members and Section history Mike has so often made contributions to our nominations and awards that are not visible yet are so important. Fondly remembered is one dinner nomination meeting astutely convened by Ruth Tanner; we went into the meeting with a written list and left with a much better list thanks to Mike's contributions."*

Beyond the Nucleus:

In addition, Mike has served as an Alternate Councilor for 6 years and as a Councilor for 12 years, as well as Director at Large and numerous NESACS committees. Mike has also served on a national ACS level for the Committee on Chemical Abstracts Service as well as the Local Section Activities Committee.

Passing the torch.

Morton Hoffman, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, Boston University, shares a few words: *“I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to Mike Filosa for his 15 years of service to the Northeastern Section as the Editor of the Nucleus. It has been a privilege and an honor to have my name appear with his on the masthead of the NESACS newsmagazine as an Associate Editor, Feature Editor, Photographer, and Proofreader, and with an occasional byline in the Table of Contents for the articles I contributed. Mike produced 9-10 issues each year during his time at the helm with great care, sensitivity, and professionalism in the tradition of the previous Editors of the Nucleus.”*

“Mike’s first issue as Editor was that of March 2005 (Vol. LXXXIII, No. 7), which featured, sadly, reminiscences about the life of my B.U. colleague, Arno Heyn, who served as Nucleus Editor for 14 years and passed away in December 2004. It was a 24-page issue that contained, among other items, a list of the ACS Scholars who were undergraduates at universities within NESACS, a description of the Massachusetts Science Poetry Contest for K-8 students, a research report by a NESACS Summer Scholar, a book review, an article on improving air quality, and, sadly again, a number of obituary remembrances of deceased members. It was an issue that would have made Arno proud.”

Outside of Chemistry:

Michael Singer, NESACS Secretary writes the following: *“My favorite Michael Filosa memory is outside of NESACS and Chemistry. I have been a Special Olympics Coach for my son’s teams for almost 20 years. Imagine my surprise when at one of the local state tournaments, I saw Mike Filosa cheering on one of the opposing squads. We talked after the game and I discovered that Mike has a son, Peter, who also participated in Special Olympics sports. As a Special Olympics coach, I have always enjoyed seeing the pride and joy in the parents of our athletes as their child participates and enjoys the thrill of competition. We were able to discuss Special Olympics and the importance of sports in the lives of our sons. Since that time, I have seen Mike and Peter at many competitions with Dad cheering on for his son. Well done Mike !”*

Now, after almost 150 issues, it is time for Mike to pass the editorial torch. As *the Nucleus*, which he loved and nurtured, moves toward its centenary, I hope each new issue will continue to be the institutional memory of the Northeastern Section for years, decades, and, perhaps, centuries, to come, and will serve as the historical legacy of a great organization.

As pilots are wont to say to each other upon landing safely, I say to Mike, *“It was great flying with you.”* Mike has opted to complete his role as Editor of *the Nucleus* at the end

of this year. As Mindy Levine notes, “*He has left very big shoes to fill!*” Mike will continue to serve on the Board of Publications. On behalf of the Board of Publications, I would like to thank Mike for his wonderful service and leadership.



Michael Filosa on the honor of receiving the 2012 Henry Hill Award



Michael Filosa (r) with John Petersen (Executive Director, IUPAC) and Madeleine Jacobs (Executive Director and CEO, ACS)



(l-r) Ruth Tanner, Mike Filosa, Dorothy Phillips, Madeleine Jacobs.



*Mike Filosa with Liming Shao (2013 NESACS Chair).
Photos are by Morton Hoffman*