

Optical Engineering

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The End of the World As We Know It and Giving Thanks

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With many others, I was sitting around on 21 December waiting for the world to end according to the prediction about the end of the Mayan calendar. I went in to work, signed some time cards, passed out some Christmas gifts to people in my division office, and left early to pick up my kids (the 14-year-old triplets). I picked them up around 2 p.m. and started the long drive to the small town of Sylvania outside Savannah, Georgia, to spend Christmas with my family. This town is in a county of roughly 5000 people, and spending a few days there is like stepping back in time 50 years. We arrived at 11 p.m., so the nine-hour drive gave me plenty of time to think about how the world was going to end. My triplets gave me many accounts of how they thought it would end, such as a meteor hitting the earth right on Interstate 95, or global warming causing the atmosphere to trigger a sudden and immediate toxic reaction in the air that humans could not survive. They were much more creative than I was since I thought maybe the sun would just explode taking out the Earth in missile-like chunks. It was a good end-of-the-world driving party.

This month marks the end of the old *Optical Engineering* and the beginning of a new *Optical Engineering*. This month, the new open access program begins for all SPIE journals. Authors who pay for voluntary page charges will have a journal paper with open access at publication. As you know, in the past I have encouraged all authors to pay the voluntary page charges, as this revenue helps SPIE cover publishing costs and maintain modest subscription prices. The page charges

will be \$100 per page for *Optical Engineering*, and the open access will be immediate upon online publication (after copy-editing and typesetting). As I stated before in September, SPIE will continue to publish papers for authors who are unable to pay page charges, but these papers will not be open access.

In addition to reminding you about the new open access program that was developed by SPIE, I would also like to say thanks to the staff for another great year. The SPIE journals staff are some of the hardest working people I know who take on some extreme challenges by academic, government, and industry standards. Each year they set another record for the number of papers processed and published (last year was a 45% increase) while decreasing significantly the time to publication (an entire month last year). They maintain high standards and track the data that I use to ensure reasonable acceptance rates and decision times. I would also like to thank the associate editors for their hard work. Their supervision of the review process is successful because they are highly qualified experts who take the time to understand papers and reviewer comments. They are unpaid, but they take precious time in their lives to service our community, and they do so while ensuring *Optical Engineering* continues to improve in quality. I am grateful for these people, just as those of you who publish in and/or read *Optical Engineering* should be too. I will be providing a summary of journal performance next month so that you can see how *Optical Engineering* is doing overall.

I looked up the Mayan calendar just for grins and it looks to me like it was a system based on a rotation of 20 days with unique names for the days. As far as I could tell, it looked to me like "Kawak" was kind of like our Friday and "Ajaw" was kind of like our Saturday. That is, instead of TGIF, it would be TGIK. In fact, we would have to wait 20 days for TGIK to come back around! I have a hard time waiting 7 days. Maybe our calendar is another thing to be thankful for this year. I wish all of you a good year and hope that your work this year is funded, productive, timely, and most of all, fun. I also hope you make your days count and that you don't waste them.

Happy New Year!

Ronald G. Driggers
Editor