

## JAMES A. JUNKIN ASSP Editorial Review Board Chair

The ASSP Editorial Review Board helps to ensure that *Professional Safety* provides high-quality, technically accurate content that advances the practice of workplace safety and health. Members of this committee support an anonymous peer-review process through which they evaluate and provide feedback on manuscript submissions.



**James Junkin**  
James A. Junkin, M.S., CSP, SMS, ASP, CSHO, is CEO of Mariner-Gulf Consulting and Services LLC and chair of the Veriforce Strategic Advisory Board. He is Columbia Southern University's 2022 Safety Professional of the Year (Runner Up) and a master trainer and keynote speaker. He is author of many articles and has appeared frequently as a guest on podcasts. Junkin is a professional member of ASSP's Greater Baton Rouge Chapter and serves as a member of the Society's Advisory Group and chair of its Editorial Review Board.

### PSJ: Why did you volunteer to serve on the Editorial Review Board (ERB)?

**James:** I am a passionate reader and lifelong learner, and I really value *Professional Safety* and the articles published in the journal. When I saw the opportunity to serve as an ERB member, I thought, that's something that aligns with my skill set and something I'm very passionate about, which is getting workers home safe from high-hazard jobs, improving my practice, and also maybe giving back to others and leaving some insight to individuals who want to get published. It was perfect for me because I like to read and it would give me a chance to give back and contribute to the journal, and maybe learn some new ideas along the way as well.

### PSJ: Since joining the ERB, what have you learned about PSJ that members may not know?

**James:** People may not realize all that goes into publishing a monthly periodical like *Professional Safety*. There is a lot of detail that the PSJ staff go through to deliver a monthly journal. Many people may take for granted that the journal shows up every month. But they don't necessarily understand all the hard work that the team goes through to make that happen.

### PSJ: Why is the anonymous peer-review process important and how do authors benefit from it?

**James:** With anonymous peer review, the reviewers don't know who the authors are, so it's the best articles, the best ideas and research that get published to fulfill our mission of improving safety and health for workers. But also, the process brings together a diverse set of reviewers with many different backgrounds and experiences, and authors benefit from receiving feedback from all those different perspectives and backgrounds. The ERB is what I consider a good cross section of the average PSJ readership.

### PSJ: As an author yourself, what are some of the benefits that you've experienced from publishing articles in the journal?

**James:** For me, there's a personal satisfaction of being recognized among your peers. I know how proud my mother was when I was cited for the first time. She thought that was pretty cool. My mother signed up for Google Scholar so she could see if I was getting cited. Going through the peer-review process as an author has also helped me become a better writer.

### PSJ: When recruiting people to submit articles or write for the profession, what common objections do you hear and how do you counter them?

**James:** The number one objection that I hear is people saying they don't have time, that they're too busy. People have things going on in their professional life, in their personal life, family obligations, and I sympathize with that. What I tell people is to just start. You can set it down, you can come back to it. But if publishing an article is something that you really want to do, you have to make time for it. If you really want to accomplish this goal, don't wait.

The ERB is really good about giving thorough feedback to help enhance an article to meet the standards of publication in peer review, and help refine

## WHAT PSJ AUTHORS SAY

"Writing has impacted my career quite a lot. It's not necessarily something I thought that I would be doing. Now my resume has a section for publications. It's something I get asked about whenever I interview."  
— Brandon Hody

"You have the potential to affect someone else's safety program in a positive way. And if we do those things well enough, somebody gets to go home to their family."  
— Thomas Kramer

"What I've gotten out of the writing process is the ability to share. I think we all have different ways as professionals that we share our expertise and our knowledge with people. Writing is one way that works for me. What I've gotten out of it is the ability to put those kinds of things on paper. They're there forever. That article will always be there."  
— Pam Walaski

"The more I write, the more I network with people. People read the things that I write and they reach out. I have found many collaborators through the process, so it's been very rewarding. That's a motivation for me."  
— Richard Olawoyin

"In industry, problems come up every day, and you're always seeking answers to those problems. Some things that you're doing in your job, things that are going on in your plant or your industry may not be widely done or widely understood. Take that opportunity to spread that message. It may not be out there in the literature, and it may be that what you're doing or experiencing in your operation can benefit others."  
— Joel Haight

"Any person who's on the fence about taking the leap to write for a publication, I would say go for it. You have the skills and the knowledge capacity, and seeing yourself on the page is a great feeling."  
— Jamie Ingalls

it for the *PSJ* readership. I always tell people don't let perfect be the enemy of good. If you think it's good, send it on in and the process can help refine your work for publication.

**PSJ: What are some tips that you can offer to help potential contributors overcome their fear of the peer-review process?**

**James:** The reviewers are people just like you, and many of us have also submitted work and received feedback. It's OK to get constructive criticism because it's another set of eyes. Speaking for myself, I'm not an objective reviewer of my own work. My brain often moves faster than my fingers can type, so the structure may be confusing to the reader. Having other people review my work can help me identify those problem areas and help to make it more concise and digestible.

The review process is really there to help the author refine what they're presenting so the reader can learn from the article and take away practical information they can use to help better protect workers from hazards on the job. That's why we're all here—we are all working toward the same goal of helping our employers provide a safer, healthier workplace.

**PSJ: As an avid *PSJ* reader, how do you read the journal? What's your favorite place to start?**

**James:** My favorite place to start is with the peer-reviewed articles. I really like to see people get published and I might remember an article from the review process. I like to flip through to see who wrote the articles that we read and approved, and see some of the changes that took place, maybe see how some of the advice we gave was incorporated. I'm really proud when an article gets published where we've given some constructive feedback to the authors and they've incorporated it and the process has helped them. I hope the other *PSJ* readers enjoy reading as much as I do.

**PSJ: Any final thoughts?**

**James:** People may not realize that they have something to share with the profession. If it's of interest to you as a safety professional, there's a good chance it's of interest to a lot of safety professionals. I encourage people to write and submit. Let your voice be heard, because *PSJ* exists to support the profession. It's for safety professionals and by safety professionals. **PSJ**

“Going through the peer-review process as an author has helped me become a better writer.”

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