

Editorial

Welcome to new faces, and other changes at JEB

Over the past 15 years, the number of manuscript submissions to *The Journal of Experimental Biology* has mushroomed in a way that few would have predicted in the late 1980s. With almost 900 manuscripts to shepherd through peer review in 2005, it became clear that the demands placed on the team of seven editors were becoming excessive. Added to which, Peter Lutz's sudden illness and untimely death in February 2005 placed the remaining editors under increasing pressure. In response to the situation, Hans Hoppeler, Editor-in-Chief, has invited two new members to join his team; Raul Suarez to handle manuscripts addressing metabolic physiology, and Janis Weeks to handle submissions in neurophysiology. Both Suarez and Weeks are long-term contributors to the journal and are very active in their own research fields. Both have seamlessly fitted into and are actively contributing to the relentless peer review schedule.

Suarez, based at the University of California in Santa Barbara, lists his interests as ecological physiology, the evolutionary design of functional capacities and the energetics of animal locomotion. His interests often take him to exotic locations to investigate the physiology of bees and hummingbirds in a quest to understand one of integrative biology's most long-standing puzzles: allometric scaling. Suarez is actively involved in the current lively debate about issues around allometric scaling, which is being fought out between the covers of this and several other world-class journals.

Working at the University of Oregon in the Institute of Neuroscience, Weeks studies the neurophysiology of *Manduca sexta*, investigating the role of steroid hormones in the organization of neural circuits. Using a variety of techniques from cell biology and electrophysiology to modern gene chip technology, Weeks has shown that steroid hormones can lead to the loss of larval behaviour patterns during metamorphosis by modifying neuronal synaptic connections.

More recently, we have also seen the departure of Yfke van Bergen, who skilfully wrote and managed JEB's front section during Kathryn Phillips' period of leave. We wish Yfke all the best with her future career.

As some of you will know, JEB is one of three journals produced by The Company of Biologists, a not-for-profit organisation that is overseen by a team of academic Directors. The Directors recently made several decisions that directly affect all three journals – *The Journal of Experimental Biology*,

Journal of Cell Science and *Development* – with effect from 1 January 2006. The first, taken in light of the increasing emphasis on rapid electronic publishing, is to provide the corresponding author of each paper with free electronic access to the PDF of their paper in place of the 50 free reprints previously supplied. Distributed as soon as the journal is published online, the toll-free link will supply authors with instant access to the PDF of their paper and banish the sometimes lengthy delays associated with the delivery of paper reprints. Corresponding authors are also permitted to distribute the link to anyone requesting a copy of their paper, with a maximum of 250 copies to be downloaded during the 6-month period that the paper is otherwise available by subscription only.

In response to increasing numbers of referees choosing to donate their fee to the Travelling Fellowships Scheme, the Directors also decided to discontinue these token payments from 1 January 2006. Instead, the payments will be automatically directed to the charitable works supported by the company, including the Travelling Fellowships scheme, which has enabled many young scientists to take advantage of training opportunities provided by collaborative visits to other laboratories that would not have been possible if it were not for such funding. While both of these changes have been brought about in response to continually changing circumstances within the publishing industry, we hope that the integrative biology community will appreciate the benefits that they offer.

In line with this, Michaela Handel has been appointed as JEB Managing Editor, overseeing the peer review and production of the journal. Dr Handel will also work closely with the Editors and Directors of the Company to ensure that the journal develops in line with the changing needs of the academic community and publishing world whilst maintaining the high standards associated with the JEB.

And finally, those of you who are avid followers of ISI's impact factor will have noticed in June that JEB's impact factor has reached 2.68. Although we have seen a gradual increase in the journal's impact factor over the past few years, this is the highest that we have achieved and confirms the JEB in its niche as the first choice for comparative biologists the world over.

Hans Hoppeler (Editor-in-Chief)
 Kathryn Phillips (News and Views Editor)