A Fond Farewell

It is always difficult to put words to a farewell “swan song”, particularly one that has been as enjoyable as my last five years as Editor of IOVS. As with most good songs though, I think my message should be short and sweet. The simple message I would like to convey, therefore, is a heartfelt “Thank You!” to all the people who have helped me in my work with IOVS over the years.

The first “thanks” goes to the ARVO Trustees and organization, past and present. When I took over as Editor in 1997, we were facing a number of logistics problems (more about this later) and an increasing number of submissions. The Trustees came through with an allocation for a large increase in page numbers, allowing us to publish many excellent manuscripts that otherwise would have been declined, simply because of space limitations. Largely because of this type of unflagging support, submissions to IOVS have risen from 509 in 1997 to 1300 this past year, with about 40% of the very best making it into print.

Secondly, a very warm “thanks” goes to the dedicated staff of IOVS, again past and present. Six years ago, after my election as Editor, we were faced with serious “logistics problems”—not only moving the IOVS office to the ARVO headquarters in Bethesda, but also hiring a new full staff. In addition, the Trustees had voted to switch to self-publishing, where staff rather than an outside publisher does most of the preliminary work prior to actual publication. Joanne Angle was extremely helpful at that time in establishing the process that resulted in hiring the first IOVS Managing Editor, Mrs. Sabine Beisler. Sabine was instrumental in setting up the first office in Bethesda, hiring staff members, and getting the self-publishing project running. In retrospect, this was a monumental and daunting task, but one that she accomplished flawlessly. More recently, Ms. Joanna Matthews has been at the helm of IOVS, steering it through the problematic waters of on-line peer review and a change in Editors. It has been my pleasure to work with—actually take instructions from—Joanna. I have found few people as competent as Joanna and, at the same time, as fun to work with. Thank you, Joanna! Also, thanks to the outstanding staff you have put together: Dave Roddy, our Publication Coordinator, and Debbie Chin, our Editorial Assistant, who have been the main liaisons between me, the reviewers, and the authors, always with patience and good humor; Carey Lawrence and Joon Song, our Publication Coordinator and Online Manager, respectively, whose good work is always appreciated even though it is mainly behind the scenes; and many thanks to Cathy Dolan, my Administrative Assistant, who so ably coordinated the reams of paper integral to the review process.

My final thanks goes to all of you in the Vision Science community who have generously given your time implementing the manuscript review process. This appreciation must start with the outstanding members of the Editorial Board, who have labored long and hard to assure the accuracy and fairness of the reviews. Similarly, thanks to the literally hundreds of experts whom I have used as Guest Editorial Board members who have also worked hard to ensure the high quality of our review process. Because the review process is the core activity of any scientific journal, we have tried to pick the most knowledgeable and impartial primary reviewers, but above this, we ask the EB members and Guest EB members to “review the reviews” again to make sure that they are impartial and on the scientific mark. As Editor, I have seen the number of submissions increase substantially over the last five years, as well as an increase in the quality and novelty of the work reported in most of the individual manuscripts. The downside of this is that it has made it more difficult for me to decide on the final cut in accepting or declining any particular manuscript, a decision often based on space limitations rather than manuscript quality. The upside is that it is gratifying to hear from many of my friends in the Vision Science community that they feel it necessary to read more and more IOVS articles, even many outside their specific area of research interest.

So, I am already suffering withdrawal pains as our new Editor, Bob Frank, has begun to receive all the new manuscript submissions. Where is all that great work that I could get a privileged peek at months before actual publication? My solace in all of this is that IOVS is in the best of hands with Bob as Editor. I have known Bob for many years and know him to be fair and principled, as well as having a broad knowledge in areas of basic and clinically relevant Vision Research. Moreover, he has great experience and a passion for keeping up with the daily grind of editorial duties and making the tough decisions that are the major responsibilities of the Editor.

It has thus been my pleasure to serve you as Editor of IOVS over these last five years. I know that the journal will continue to flourish under Bob’s and Joanna’s seasoned leadership.

Gerald J. Chader