

Editor's Annual Report—June 1998

Covering the period from June 1998 through May 1999

Transfer of Editorial Office

On September 15, 1998, I took over responsibility for the editorship of *Molecular Biology and Evolution* from Barry Hall. Barry is a hard act to follow, and I was apprehensive both about filling his shoes and about the transfer. With his help and advice, however, the transition went relatively smoothly—despite the failure of one computer and the theft of another during the first week of operation. With assistance from Patricia Easteal and the IT and administrative staff at the John Curtin School of Medical Research, we hardly lost a beat. Liz Raffaele took on the position of Editorial Assistant in October, and largely because of the excellent job she is doing, the Canberra office is running very smoothly.

Manuscript Flow

We received 342 manuscripts during the reporting period, down by 4% from the 356 received during the previous 12 months (table 1). In recent months, however, the number of submissions has been relatively high—32% were received during the last 3 months. Our acceptance rate of 56% is up from 48% last year and 46% the previous year. There was an unusually high level of acceptance during the 3 months immediately before the changeover of editorship (73%), and during the past 6 months the acceptance rate has dropped to 38%. We published 191 articles, which occupied 1,893 published pages.

Associate Editors

During the year, we lost the services of Mikito Go, Dan Hartl, Craig Moritz, Barbara Schaal, Marcy Uyeno-yama, and myself, and we welcomed eight new Associate Editors: Yun-Xin Fu, Mike Hendy, David Irwin, Toby Kellogg, Franz Lang, Geoff McFadden, Bill Martin, and Willie Taylor. The Society owes a great deal to our Associate Editors, and I would like to express my

gratitude to them for the excellent job they do in maintaining the high standing of our journal.

Members and Subscribers

Our institutional subscriptions continue to increase. On May 31, 1999, we had 489 institutional subscribers. This compares with 446, 469, and 473 in May of each of the previous years. I predict that we will have ~500 institutional subscribers by the end of the year. This will be an increase of 10 over last year.

Our membership, on the other hand, is slowly declining. On May 31, 1999, we had 889 paid-up members. This compares with 936, 909, and 899 during the previous 3 years. Many societies are experiencing drops in membership, and we are not unusual in this respect. It would nevertheless be worth considering ways in which the Society could encourage new members.

Online Publishing

The Council has accepted a proposal from HighWire Press to provide online publishing for *MBE*. We expect to sign a letter of agreement with HighWire Press shortly, and the journal should appear online early in 2000. There will be a setting-up cost of ~\$23,000 and ongoing costs of ~\$29,000. There will also be additional ongoing costs to Allen Press for the preparation of SGML and PDF files of ~\$13,000. These additional costs have required some adjustment to membership fees and subscriptions. We will be implementing the scheme shown in table 2 for 2000. It is difficult to predict how members and subscribers will react to the online availability of the journal or to these price changes. The scheme will be reviewed at the 2000 Council meeting.

Simon Easteal
June 30, 1999

Table 1
Manuscript Flow from May 1998 to May 1999

Month	No. of Manuscripts		Accepted	Rejected	Closed	No. of Articles	
	Received	Still Active				Published	No. of Pages
June	17	1	13	2	1	18	161
July	31	1	18	12	0	16	150
August	30	1	23	6	0	17	159
September	18	1	8	8	1	15	140
October	31	3	18	10	0	13	138
November	30	3	14	13	0	21	204
December	32	9	11	12	0	21	231
January	25	6	6	13	0	11	145
February	18	8	5	5	0	15	162
March	40	25	3	12	0	13	116
April	36	32	2	2	0	15	147
May	34	34	0	0	0	16	140
Total	342	124	121	95	2	191	1,893

Table 2
Subscription and Membership rates for 2000

	Print	Online	Print and Online
Subscription	Not available	\$335	\$425 ^a
Membership			
Individual	\$80 ^b	\$ 40	\$100
Student	\$60 ^b	\$ 30	\$ 80
Family	\$90	\$ 45	\$110

^a This is an increase of \$60 from the 1999 cost of \$365 for a print subscription.

^b These rates remain unchanged from 1999.