

A hard act to follow

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I am very pleased to be able to contribute as a past Editor to the issue of the *Biophysical Journal* commemorating its 30th year. When I met Adrian Parsegian, my predecessor, it was clear to me seeing his unlimited energy and enthusiasm that he would be a hard act to follow. I recall when he appeared in Boston accompanied by Valerie, his wife who had been the mainstay of the editorial office in the Parsegian household, and delivered all the archival material of the editorial office. He and Valerie provided me and my secretary, Mary Caulfield, with excellent notes concerning the running of the journal, describing all of the procedures they had followed, which made our job much easier. It is hard to believe that barely ten years ago computers were not in such general use as they are today. Electronic mail was practically nonexistent, let alone FAX, and much of what can be done much more easily today still required more manual labor. It was a stage at which I was becoming interested in the use of the computer in the lab and I actually managed to put together a FORTRAN program which was a great help in keeping track of the fate of the manuscripts in the various stages of review and revision. I inherited from Adrian the custom of sending out monthly reports to Editorial Board and Publication Committee members, which gradually died out in the past decade. It might be something worth reconsidering as a valuable tool to keep in touch, a process which would be much easier with the ready access to electronic mail.

When I took over as Editor, the Journal was in a period of growth which I am happy to say has continued. Under Adrian's management the number of papers had increased and continued to do so at a perhaps more modest rate during my tenure as Editor. In those days there was perhaps greater concern about the financial status of the

Journal which, it appears, is now much more sound. I recall discussions at Publications Committee meetings about the limitations of the page budget, which was debated against the idea that it should be increased so as to accommodate all good papers; I am not sure whether this problem has been resolved by now.

I tried to delegate as much responsibility as Editorial Board members were willing to assume concerning the selection and contacting of referees, and following the fate of a manuscript up to the point of the final decision letter which would be signed by the responsible Editorial Board Member usually after consultation with me.

Being Editor had its amusing moments and often one has to be a bit of a detective, particularly when one smells a rat in a submitted manuscript. I recall at least two instances when it seemed to me that the person who submitted a paper did not do this with the knowledge and consent of his colleagues, and on looking into the matter my suspicions were confirmed.

I am very much pleased to see that the Society has become such a strong organization. This increase in strength is clearly reflected in the Journal, which in its new format is much more eye-catching and attractive than in its early, more modest garb. In recent years there has been considerable discussion about the role of the Journal and it is clear to many of us that it has become the focal point for biophysicists in some well-defined areas. In addition to the classical branches of physical biochemistry, membrane biophysics/biochemistry and the field of muscle research, in which biochemistry/biophysics and physiology become more and more intertwined, have come to represent a fair portion of the papers in the Journal. I know plans are underway to strengthen many other areas of molecular and cellular biophysics and I hope that the next thirty years, which perhaps not all of us will be around to celebrate, will see an even more vigorous and flourishing Journal.

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