

Beyond infancy

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Although chemical biology is a relatively new field, there are an increasing number of institutes and undergraduate and graduate programs focussing on the interface between chemistry and biology, and this journal is no longer alone in aiming to cater to the information needs of a growing, and increasingly mature, field. We are happy to be able to look back on a year of continued growth and development for *Chemistry & Biology*, and to have seen the enthusiasm with which our 'sister' journal, the review journal *Current Opinion in Chemical Biology*, has been greeted by chemists and biologists alike during its first year of publication.

For *Chemistry & Biology*, the past year has seen us publish more research papers, of even higher quality, from more geographically and academically diverse authors and on more topics than before, while maintaining the speed and efficiency with which submitted manuscripts are handled. Much of the credit for this goes to our invaluable Associate Editors and the in-house staff of the journal in London, as well as the legions of referees (and authors) who have put themselves out to ensure that the thorough peer-review does not conflict with the need for rapid communication of ideas in this fast-moving field. Inevitably, with the growth in numbers of submitted papers, we have had to turn away more of them than ever before, but we are confident that our efficiency and courtesy in even these transactions will mean that we have not lost friends along the way.

Our efforts to publish timely and topical reviews and discussions of research in chemical biology have received an immeasurable boon with the appointment to the post of Reviews Editor of Rebecca Ward. As the US Managing Editor for Current Biology Ltd, Rebecca led the journal from its conception through launch and well into its third year; she is now the Director of Research Affairs at the Harvard Institute of Chemistry and Cell Biology and we are delighted that she has agreed to continue her association with the journal from there.

In the coming year, readers will notice several changes to the journal. The first change began even before this issue reached you, when we began 'continuous electronic publication'. This system, which has been pioneered by our publishers with their journals *Folding & Design* and *Current Biology*, circumvents the practicalities of paper printing that have always meant that a journal is published as a single unit — once per month in the case of *Chemistry & Biology*. The full-text of the journal has always been available on the web (at <http://biomednet.com/cbiology/cmb>),

but now each paper will be published online individually, with its own publication date, soon after corrections to the proofs have been received from the authors. Readers who look at the internet version of the journal will in this way be able to see each Research Paper as soon as it is in its final form, some time before the whole issue is complete and well before the printed copy reaches every subscriber. As before, the internet version will include some information that supplements the printed journal, such as movies or additional raw data, and the internet pages will have links from the reference lists to Medline, but also links to e-mail addresses, databases, and other web sites, whenever these are mentioned in the text.

There is one practical consequence of continuous publication of research papers that we have not been able to avoid: there will be a parallel system of page numbering for the reviews and other features at the front of the journal, with an R prefix before the number of each of these pages. This is because, at the stage when the Research Papers are published online, we have no way of knowing how many pages will precede them in the printed issue. We could have solved the problem by putting the Research Papers on the first pages of each printed issue, but this idea is not popular among readers. Another alternative would have been to publish Research Papers initially without page numbers, but this would have meant that for the first part of its life a paper could not be cited in the most conventional way.

Other changes to the journal that will be apparent to readers of this and subsequent issues include a Calendar of forthcoming meetings and conferences of interest to Chemical Biologists, a guide to relevant web sites, and general reviews of the 'Frontiers' of chemical biology by leading workers in the field. We trust that these features will help chemical biologists to navigate their way around a burgeoning field, and in combination with the Research Papers will allow *Chemistry & Biology* to continue to have its place at the defining heart of chemical biology.