

Editorials

Passing the Torch

As the new Editor-in-Chief of the Journal, I am pleased to recognize my predecessor, David van Essen, for the tremendous job he has done in leading the Journal through one of its greatest periods of growth and for seeing the Rapid Communications project through from start to finish. It is also a pleasure to recognize Michael Gazzaniga, who brought forward the idea for all electronic publication some four years ago; to Sol Snyder, the retiring Chair of the Publications Committee, for his far-sighted support of this initiative; and to Nancy Beang, Sherry Dixon, and the staff of the Society for their tireless efforts on behalf of the Journal during this exciting period.

I welcome Floyd Bloom, the new Chair of the Publications Committee, who brings great insight and wisdom to the Journal from his experience with the journal *Science*. It is also a pleasure to announce that Stephen Lisberger is the new Senior Editor for Systems/Behavior. Among the Review Editors, Lisberger, Tom Carew, and John Dani have performed yeoman service, and we have been fortunate to attract John Maunsell, Carol Barnes, and Larry Trussell as their successors. The Journal is deeply indebted to them and to the continuing support of the Senior Editors, Reviewing Editors, and Associate Editors. They, together with all of the colleagues who have responded to requests to act as referees, are responsible for setting the high standards, not only of the Journal, but also of the field of neuroscience.

Gordon M. Shepherd
Editor-in-Chief

Responsible Conduct in Publishing

The Journal is pleased to announce that this issue contains a document sponsored by the Society for Neuroscience entitled "Responsible Conduct Regarding Scientific Communication," which consists of guidelines prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee on Responsibility in Publishing.

This document is the fruition of work by a committee set up by the Society in 1995 to address in a systematic fashion the responsibilities of the major parties in the publishing of articles in the field of neuroscience: authors, reviewers and editors. No one has to be told that the integrity of scientific research depends on the highest standards of ethical conduct of each of these parties in the process of generating, reviewing, and publishing scientific results. And no one has to be told that this process has been subjected to increasing strains in recent years as the field of neuroscience has undergone its strong growth. To help the Journal deal with these strains, the committee has reviewed the whole process to see the responsibilities of each party within the context of the responsibilities of the others.

It is important to point out that the initiative for this enterprise came not from top down, but from bottom up, from practical concerns arising in the field. They were communicated to the then President of the Society, Carla Schatz, who appointed Michael Zigmond to chair the committee to carry out the review. The committee met frequently and interchanged many documents in the intervening three years. It interviewed a number of people and obtained advice from lawyers and other consultants. Many of the sections underwent scrutiny word by word.

The original request was for the Society to spell out the responsibilities in publishing for the specific purpose of guiding the *Journal of Neuroscience*, but a larger purpose was to develop a set of principles to which all journals publishing in the field of neuroscience could subscribe. We therefore encourage our readers to carry the message of this document to other publications in which they may serve, so that it may be discussed and implemented, and a consensus can emerge, much along the same lines as the code of ethics for the use of animals in research.

The experience of the committee made it clear that discussions of the guidelines need to continue. A new committee is therefore being formed that will keep the guidelines under review into the near future. This means that the guidelines are a living document; all readers are encouraged to provide input to making them better and more widely applicable in the future.

Gordon M. Shepherd
Editor-in-Chief