

# A Fond Farewell ... and Good Luck to Gary Sieck

Walter F. Boron

*Physiology* 27:114, 2012. ;

doi: 10.1152/physiol.00020.2012

---

## You might find this additional info useful...

---

This article cites 2 articles, 2 of which you can access for free at:

<http://physiologyonline.physiology.org/content/27/3/114.full#ref-list-1>

Updated information and services including high resolution figures, can be found at:

<http://physiologyonline.physiology.org/content/27/3/114.full>

Additional material and information about *Physiology* can be found at:

<http://www.the-aps.org/publications/physiol>

---

This information is current as of July 9, 2013.

## A Fond Farewell . . . and Good Luck to Gary Sieck

This issue is the 54th published during my tenure as Editor, and, alas, it is the last. Nine years ago, when I succeeded Stanley Schultz as Editor of *News in Physiological Sciences*, it seemed that we had forever to accomplish our goals . . . well, in this business, forever lasts only 9 years (i.e., three 3-year terms). You, the reader, will have to judge how well we succeeded.

Separately and together, the publishers of *News in Physiological Sciences*—the American Physiological Society (APS) and the International Union of Physiological Sciences (IUPS)—came to the conclusion that the journal needed a renaissance. The late Dale Benos, then chair of the APS Publications Committee, approached me with the challenge of doing something bold.

As *Physiology* went live 8 years ago (1), my vision was to fill a perceived void in our discipline by morphing the journal into *the* home for physiologists worldwide. We would do this by publishing the finest short-format reviews, creating an appealing journal design, generating beautiful and informative artwork, and including regular features such as Editorials and Highlights From the Literature . . . and, eventually, we would publish original short reports like those in *Nature* or *Science*.

I was fortunate to recruit an outstanding, international group of scientists for our editorial board. Because many of us had served together when I was editor of *Physiological Reviews*, we quickly established the necessary camaraderie and were able to hit the ground running. I might add that the imprimatur of the IUPS greatly both facilitated the recruitment of board members and legitimized our aspiration to give this journal a truly international footprint. Helping to lead

the Journal as associate editors were two outstanding scientists and dear friends—Michael Caplan and Ulrich Pohl. And my long-time colleague Gerhard Giebisch became our special advisor, now our emeritus advisor. Those involved in the day-to-day business of *Physiology* know that the heart and soul of the enterprise is Charleen Bertolini, our editorial staff coordinator. J/B Woolsey Arts, Inc. did the journal design as well as the initial artwork, followed (after Woolsey's retirement) by Kelly Paralís and Patrick Lane. Christopher Verrico has written all of our Highlights From the Literature. Our copy editor for the last several years has been Sean Boyer. And, of course, none of this could have gone forward without the bold financial support of the APS, thoughtfully led by its Executive Director Marty Frank, then-President D. Neil Granger and his successors.

Well, how did it go? In 2009, *Physiology* won the PROSE award for the best designed journal in print. So at least we have objective evidence that we *look* pretty. Moreover, our impact factor has risen from the range of the 1s to 3s in the pre-*Physiology* years to a predicted value of 8.0 for 2011. I think that—before the effect of this editorial team is over (i.e., papers published in 2013 and then cited in 2014 and 2015)—we could exceed an impact factor of 10. I hasten to point out that that impact factor cannot be the be-all and end-all in our business . . . sometimes we must publish a review paper simply because it is the right thing to do for informing the community. Nevertheless, a several-fold improvement in impact factor would be a feather in the cap of physiology the discipline. But I think that *Physiology* could do even better. Its library subscription base is less than half that of *Physiological Reviews*, suggesting that *Physiology* could achieve a much

greater penetration into libraries, which would translate to better access to articles and thus a higher impact factor. I have long been predicting a positive-feedback scenario in which gains in impact factor will lead to more library subscriptions and thus even greater gains in the impact factor area.

What made it work? My strongly held belief has always been that the success of *Physiology*—as well as that of *Physiological Reviews*—rests in the hands of its editorial board (which chooses the topics and authors, and serves as reviewing editors), authors, and reviewers, all of whom must be at the highest level. The problem is that all of these people are extremely busy. The challenge to the editor is simple: recruit the editorial board and convince the authors to respond positively to our invitations. The challenge to the editorial assistant is far more difficult: prod the authors into producing their contributions in a timely way—and make this process as easy as possible for the board members and the authors. This last job requires a lot of hand holding and tender loving care . . . if you want busy people to contribute, you must take on for them many of the mundane tasks and make the experience pleasant.

What may our future be? Last year, I suggested (2) that the time has come for *Physiology* to begin planning for the publication of short original reports. Although a decision has not been made, that would be a good thing both because it would help propel *Physiology* the journal to the next level and because it would be a major service to physiology, the discipline, worldwide.

The new editor of *Physiology* as of July 1 will be Gary Sieck, from the Mayo Clinic. I wish Gary the best of luck and will publicly let him in on a little secret: With an outstanding editorial board and editorial staff coordinator, this job is pretty easy and a lot of fun. ■

### References

1. Boron WF. The new *Physiology*. *Physiology* 19: 160, 2004.
2. Boron WF. A vision for *Physiology*—the journal. *Physiology* 26: 208–209, 2011.