The Journals of the American Physiological Society

The Journals of the American Physiological Society are its lasting contribution to science. Since the first days of the American Journal of Physiology, the Journals have been a paradigm of excellence in scientific communication. No library that serves physiologists, biologists, or physicians can do without them. No inventory of the present state of scientific reporting can ignore them. This continued preeminence over the years was not a simple feat because physiology has continued to change and the publications of the Society have had to adjust accordingly.

Matching the Journals to fresh interests and new horizons in physiology has always been the job of the Publications Committee. Each generation of new committee members has faced the same challenge of timeliness and excellence and, over the years, each committee has resorted to different strategies to satisfy its obligation. New sections appeared in the American Journal of Physiology. When reshuffling and repackaging no longer sufficed, more drastic steps were taken: the Journal of Applied Physiology was split off from the parent Journal; the Journal of Neurophysiology was purchased and adapted to the needs of the Society.

These strategems worked well until the 1960's. But, by then, specialization and fractionation were becoming the rule in physiology. The ranks of the "generalist" in physiology had grown thinner and thinner. Many new specialty journals began to appear under new sponsorship. Some were headed by members of the American Physiological Society. The new journals competed effectively with the American Journal of Physiology, the Journal of Applied Physiology, and the Journal of Neurophysiology for the best papers. Although the dedicated efforts of the Section Editors and of reviewers still sufficed to keep the journals of the Society in the forefront, it seemed clear to recent Publications Committees that a new mechanism had to be established by which the journals of the Society would surge into the lead again, not only in covering the broad perspectives of physiology but also in coping with the specialized needs of smaller constituencies within the Society.

Since the Society was unremittingly committed to excellence in its journals, the challenge was to develop a fresh approach to publishing that would satisfy both the generalist and the specialist in physiology. After many months of discussion and consultation, a solution emerged and is implemented with this issue of the journals. The plan consists of the following essential elements:

1. The American Journal of Physiology and the Journal of Applied Physiology will continue to exist and to be available as separate publications of the American Physiological Society. This continuing arrangement will satisfy both the generalist in physiology and the librarian who will be able to preserve unbroken series of these two distinguished journals.

2. The Journal of Applied Physiology, under its own editorial board, will restrict itself to papers in respiration, exercise, and environmental physiology.

3. The American Journal of Physiology will henceforth be an umbrella for separate journals, each with its own editorial board and each devoted to specialized subject matter. Each component will be issued separately as well as part of the American Journal of Physiology. This arrangement will satisfy the specialist who is interested in having on hand outstanding papers in his own particular field of interest.

Each editorial board has been encouraged to exercise editorial individuality and ingenuity. The overall review process, for the parent journals as well as the component journals, will remain unchanged. But, the editors have been encouraged to develop mechanisms for review that will expedite the handling of papers without sacrificing quality. The Publications Committee will retain the responsibility for coordinating the general activities of the journals, for setting guiding policy, and for assuring both quality and responsiveness to the needs of the Society.

In the process of restructuring the American Journal of Physiology, two new substituent themes were identified: cell physiology; and regulatory, integrative, and comparative physiology. These reflect new directions that need coverage and cultivation in our journals. Both themes are now represented as separate journals.

Equally important, provision has been made for accommodating other specialized aspects of physiology in our journals as the need arises.

The American Journal of Physiology, the Journal of Applied Physiology, and the Journal of Neurophysiology now provide unparalleled opportunity for publishing the results of original research in physiology. Subdivision of the parent journals provides for continued flexibility and accommodation to changing times. When viewed in conjunction with Physiological Reviews and...
the *Handbooks of Physiology*, the publications of the Society now provide the broadest coverage of physiology in the world.

To top it all off, the *American Journal of Physiology*, the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, and the five component journals of the *American Journal of Physiology* have undergone a face-lift. New and attractive covers announce the independence and distinctive personalities of the seven journals. However, within the new covers, the format, the print, and the illustrations, which are unrivaled in legibility and attractiveness, are retained.

These revisions are the products of many years of exploration and deliberation. The new venture seems to provide the exhilarating prospect of retaining the best of the old while opening new doors for cultivation and presentation of the new. As this venture moves ahead, the Publications Committee would welcome the comments and advice of the members of the Society.

Alfred P. Fishman, Chairman
Publications Committee