

EDITORIAL

In August 1962, William 'Bill' Hovanitz founded the *Journal of Research on the Lepidoptera* (JRL). Ever since, JRL has served as a prominent venue for scientists from around the globe to publish their research results. JRL has established itself as one of the few scholarly edited, truly international journals devoted entirely to the species-rich order Lepidoptera. Over the past five decades JRL matured in the company of, and usually friendly competition, with a few similar-aimed scientific periodicals as the *Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society* (started in 1947), *Lepidoptera Science* (formerly *Transactions of the Lepidopterological Society of Japan*, or earlier *Tyô to Ga*; issued since 1949), and *Nota lepidopterologica* (from 1977 onwards; published by *Societas Europaea Lepidopterologica*, SEL).

Hovanitz was editor until his premature death in 1977. Rudi Mattoni then was selected editor of the journal as well as president of *The Lepidoptera Research Foundation*. The *Foundation* owns the JRL and provides the resources for its production. Under the Mattoni's auspices JRL continued for over 30 years, from Volume 16 through to Volume 43. In the 49 years since the establishment of JRL, the approach to scientific publishing has changed so radically that nobody could have even remotely anticipated these developments. In the 1960's manuscripts were in reality still typescripts (often with subsequent amendments in hand-writing) which had to be fully re-typed for printing – a time-consuming and error-prone procedure. In the 1980's personal computers and word processing appeared and changed publishing forever. Authors soon were expected to provide manuscripts in electronic form. But still much of the publication process, especially submission and reviewing, required the physical transfer of paper copies. I well recall my first own submission to JRL that required me to deliver a number of paper copies for reviewing, plus a now extinct diskette, from Germany to California. There

was substantial cost for the mailing as well. This happened on 15th January 1990. Almost exactly two months later, after reviewers' comments had been received and incorporated, I was able to send the revised manuscript package a second time to Rudi. Again, months later, after receiving and returning proofs, the paper finally appeared in print (*Journal of Research on the Lepidoptera* 28: 239–257, 1991).

Yet, submitting papers as data files that could be directly used for printing, once revised and finally edited, was the first step towards electronic publishing. With the exponential growth of the worldwide web in the 1990's the next revolution commenced. In 2010, with Volume 43, JRL responded to this new world by becoming a fully open-access online journal, available free to anyone anywhere on Earth with an interest in the Lepidoptera. This critical step was still completely guided by Rudi, but at this juncture he sought a person to take responsibilities for JRL into the future. At the XVIIth *European Congress of Lepidopterology*, held at Luxemburg from May 9 to 14, 2011 under the auspices of SEL, a number of colleagues who already served the new expanded Editorial Board of JRL convened and the role of the Editor was formally handed over to me. I accepted this honor and obligation with respect and pleasure.

Hence, with Volume 44, now finalized, we have published the last group of papers edited and processed by Rudi, and the first collection of papers guided by the new editor and his colleagues from the board. Rudi Mattoni continues as the president of the *Foundation*. I am most thankful to my predecessor and good friend Rudi, as well as my eminent colleagues on the board for their confidence and support – to further develop JRL and to increase its standards of excellence as a scholarly scientific periodical on the international scene. This is the crucial goal for me in the years to come and I solicit cooperation from everyone.

Scientific publishing has turned into 'big business' in recent years, but now is experiencing an increasingly severe crisis. Many 'classical' journals have become so expensive that ever fewer institutional libraries (and indirectly taxpayers) are able and willing to pay these costs. Printing, mailing and processing hardcopies has simultaneously become so costly that more and more scientific information is mainly, if not exclusively, stored or at least transmitted over the internet. At the same time, new journals are sprouting

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like mushrooms everywhere, many of them with poor quality control and many of them exclusively on websites with no guarantee of their content availability over the long run. JRL continues to produce printed hardcopies for subscribers and life members. We also deliver hardcopies of each individual publication with nomenclatorial relevance to 9 internationally prominent institutions, simultaneous with online publication, to meet the criteria of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* with regard to the availability of suggested names or name changes. Otherwise, the publication process of JRL is completely web-based with the final product open accessible and free to all under the premises of Creative Commons license agreements (<http://creativecommons.org/>).

Manuscripts are submitted through e-mail, are distributed to reviewers via e-mail, with all subsequent steps of editing and finalizing manuscripts handled this way. Once authors have sent the last corrections with their proofs to us, the formatted paper is published online on our website at once, and the paper is sent by e-mail to our life members and subscribers. All this smooth and quick handling can only be achieved through the help of our editorial manager, Nancy Vannucci. She deserves my sincere thanks for her efforts and excellent support!

Even though electronic technologies facilitate and speed up communication, we continue to strive for scholarly quality of the papers to be published in JRL. Therefore, each submitted manuscript is reviewed by at least two independent peers, usually one from the editorial board and one colleague from outside. This is in practice the most time-demanding step since all potential reviewers are burdened with manifold obligations. The editorial team of JRL therefore apologizes for any delay that authors may sometimes be confronted with, but according to our policy scientific quality takes precedence over speed.

In the last decade, another threat to scientific publishing has emerged from the ever increasing tendency of institutions and funding agencies to evaluate scientists on the grounds of so-called 'bibliometric' indicators. Scientists are thereby pushed to publish their findings in as many (and as small) pieces as possible to increase the length and 'impressiveness' of their publication lists. Concomitantly, their papers only 'count' if these are published in periodicals listed by the *ISI Web of Science*®, run by the company Thomson Reuters. Only ISI-listed journals receive a so-called 'impact factor' IF, and only papers with IF are meaningful when it comes to decisions about offering tenure positions to young scientists. Even though this use of impact factors has long been recognized as misuse

(e.g. Kokko & Sutherland, 1999; Amin & Mabe, 2000; Leimu & Koricheva, 2005, Falagas *et al.*, 2008; Retzer & Jurasinski, 2009), journals not listed in ISI data bases are increasingly unattractive, at least for young scientists who need to care for a perspective in science, to publish their research results. We are striving for getting JRL listed by ISI and also by Scopus®, an alternative and widely used database run by the publishing company Elsevier.

Even though JRL is not (yet) listed by ISI, many papers published in our journal have been cited widely and can be traced via the 'Cited Reference Search' menu of that data base. The five top-cited articles (as of 12th December 2011) are: O. Shields (Hilltopping: An ecological study of summit congregation behavior of butterflies on a Southern California hill, 6: 69–187, 1967, cited 127 times); J. A. Scott (Mating of butterflies, 11: 99–127, 1973, cited 51 times), P. J. DeVries (Stratification of fruit-feeding butterflies in a Costa Rican rainforest, 26: 98–108, 1988, cited 50 times); R. L. Rutowski (Sexual selection and the evolution of butterfly mating behaviour, 23: 125–142, 1984, cited 37 times); and R. A. Raguso & J. Llorente-Bousquets (The butterflies (Lepidoptera) of the Tuxtla Mts., Veracruz, Mexico, revisited: Species-richness and habitat disturbance, 29: 105–133, 1991, cited 37 times). Using the Google Scholar® routine retrieves an even larger number of scientific papers and books wherein articles published in JRL have been cited. These brief examples substantiate that JRL is recognized as an important source of scientific information by the lepidopterist community around the globe.

What is the way to go from here? It is relevant to recall and emphasize that JRL neither has a regional focus nor any editorial bias with regard to taxa within the order Lepidoptera. We therefore encourage all scientists with an interest in the Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) to submit their research results for publication in JRL. Papers from all relevant disciplines, be it morphology or ecology, systematics or conservation biology, behavioral biology or applied entomology, are welcome. Besides full research papers we also accept, at our editorial discretion, short notes. There are only two restrictions, viz. scholarly quality and relevance of each contribution beyond a very narrow readership. For example, single distribution or host-plant records of individual species will fall into consideration only if they are of extraordinary significance in a broader conceptual context, such as biogeography or evolution. Likewise, mere species lists are typically not considered, even though they may have their relevance and merits on a regional or national level, for example in nature conservation and management. Beyond that, pending of course the

outcome of mandatory peer review, we offer to our authors quick open access online publication free of cost, including color illustrations. Accordingly, papers published in JRL are visible worldwide from the day they are presented online.

We hope that with this editorial policy, which is in place since Volume 43, JRL will overcome the irregularity of its appearance in print that was at times a problem in past years. JRL offers, since almost 50 years, to the worldwide community of lepidopterists a unique venue to publicize their scholarly research findings in an international framework. It depends on the resonance within the community whether we will be able to continue with that service for the decades to come, despite and in view of all the ongoing revolutions in scientific publishing. In the era of a global biodiversity crisis and given the prominent role charismatic animals like butterflies and moths can play in fostering the scientific understanding of biodiversity at large, the need is out there. Will there be continual demand for our service?

EDITORIAL FOOTNOTE

I cannot say enough in praise of Konrad Fiedler as editor of the JRL. Although reluctant to recognize my mortality, the future of the JRL clearly depended on finding a suitable replacement to assure the future of the venture. Although some of my biomedical friends assure me immortality may be achievable in the future because of the large effort is being spent, it is unlikely to be soon enough. A pragmatic approach was necessary. I have known Konrad since his graduate student days and am very gratified with his achievements in our field, not only in research but in education as well. He has a distinguished career as a scholar and certainly is dedicated to bring the highest level of performance with the JRL. Konrad is a true academic. They are becoming harder to find.

Although the primary goal of the *Foundation* is support of the JRL, our overriding concern is with promoting research in addition to disseminating its results. The world now faces an uncertain future with limits of growth of many key materials clearly in sight. Entrained climate change and other macro-trends will provide additional interest. The next 20 years will be completely unlike the past 20 years and likely not pleasant. In the meantime the *Foundation* should persevere and hopefully provide continuing support. We will need help here at some point to maintain direction, operationality and support. We will keep you informed.

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In the past there has been some concern that the *Foundation* was competitive with the great societies in our field, especially the *Lepidopterists Society* and the SEL. There was a hint of this in the original organization, but we have long not been a membership society. We in fact sincerely support these societies. Our goal is education and publication. We are formulating an initiative to provide of travel funds for graduates to meetings. We have funded research efforts of several students in the past and a survey project. Not to be outdone, we supported a butterfly and arts exhibition and seminar in Buenos Aires. The projects are all described on our website, which we strive to improve, in addition to developing contacts through the social networking sites as Facebook, and have started a listing of professional Lepidopterists of the world. The latter has accumulated over 400 names, but has been bogged down in defining “professional.” The number of colleagues at this level was astonishing, yet still quite incomplete, but happily indicates a large set of like minds out there.

We have also published two notable books in the past: the revision of the giant silkworm genus *Attacus* by Richard Peigler, and the Butterflies of Baja California by John Brown, Herman Real and David Faulkner. Then there are the small field guide and poster, *Butterflies of Greater Los Angeles* by your former editor that sold nearly 10,000 copies, the

Garden Butterflies of Buenos Aires by Rudi Mattoni and Nancy Vannucci (in English and Spanish), and the Big Moths of Buenos Aires and Southern Uruguay by Rudi Mattoni and Fernando Penco (at printers), available from the *Foundation*. Last but not least, the Pelham Catalogue of the Butterflies of the United States and Canada, published as Volume 40, is available as a separate. This 600 page tome represented a two year effort with Andy Warren as editor and rewrites Nancy Vannucci thought would never end.

Business has been managed by Leona Mattoni since 1977, and all such inquiries should be addressed to her. However, Leona has been exhausted by the

years of dedicated effort and the arrangement must change soon. In the meantime, send checks to her or pay by Paypal. Bioquip products has performed some business and has most inventory of our books and past journals. So little printed material is selling, we are unclear on the future of the arrangement as the costs or storage may not be worth the effort as the Gutenberg mass era is obviously in its twilight as print formats become very specialized.

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