

EDITOR'S CORNER

How to Start and Maintain the Publication of a Journal

With this issue the *Journal of Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology* will complete its fifth volume. It is a small milestone for a new journal and, as the editor, I would like to reflect on the creation and continuance of this journal.

Why a New Journal?

I have been on editorial boards of many national and international journals for the past 25 years and truly enjoy the challenge and excitement of working with hundreds of manuscripts and have seen many excellent works published and sometimes some less than excellent works not published. It is indeed an honor to be in this process because I feel like I have an important contribution to the flow of knowledge from the laboratories and desks of scholars and researchers to the printed pages so that others can be benefitted by the diligent works of these dedicated individuals. There are no lack of good journals in the world but as I read paper after paper I realize that many important **Procedures and Methods** are not given enough exposure. Since I have followed the field of Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology from its very beginning in 1973 at the Stockholm Symposium, I decided to start a new journal concentrating on rapid methods.

How to Start the Journal?

A journal does not spring out of nowhere. An editor must first realize the need for the journal and then he/she must find a publisher to produce the work. I had a collection of manuscripts from my laboratory on hand, sometime in 1991 and 1992, ready to be sent to a journal. I also knew some friends had good manuscripts on methods that were ready for submission for publication. I approached Dr. Thomas Montville, editor of *Journal of Food Safety* which is published by Food and Nutrition Press (FNP), and suggested that I edit one special issue of his journal concentrating on rapid methods. He agreed. A special issue on Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology was published as Volume 11, Number 3 of *Journal of Food Safety* as a "trial balloon." To my delight after that issue John O'Neil, president of FNP, informed me that he would publish the *Journal of Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology* as one of many specialized journals published by FNP. I invited Dr. Millicent Goldschmidt as co-editor and many scientific friends to be on the editorial board. With the help of these colleagues a new journal was born in 1992.

How to Get Readers?

It is one thing to publish something but is another thing to have people subscribe and read your work! I have been directing a workshop on rapid methods at Kansas State University since 1981 and developed a wonderful family of applied microbiologists around the world. From this base I solicited subscribers and readers. Later I decided to make a subscription to the *Journal* for one year a part of the registration package for all the participants of the workshop. Thus, every year the *Journal* has about 50 new subscribers.

Of course I hope these new subscribers will continue to subscribe after the first year. Thus I have been able to slowly but surely increase readers of the *Journal*. I also carry pamphlets of the *Journal* description to national and international meetings to advertise the *Journal*. All these activities help to increase readership. I can always do more on this activity.

Where do the Papers Come From?

One of the greatest worries of an editor is lack of manuscripts. I talk to my friends and encourage them to publish in this journal. I hope the editorial board members themselves will submit papers to the *Journal*. And sometimes I submit works from my own laboratory to the *Journal* - the fewer the better! Sometimes papers just appeared in my mail from different places around the country and around the world. I am grateful for those papers and work hard to clear them quickly.

Working with FNP

It is a pleasure to work with the professional staff of FNP. They keep things moving at the correct speed and do a wonderful job in typesetting papers, proofreading, correcting and editing, and finally having the volume and the issue published and mailed. All these take time, energy, dedication and coordination. The result, of course, is the beautiful *Journal* you hold in your hands.

Should you Start a Journal?

Think Before you Jump into this Arena. It is very time-consuming. I cannot imagine myself editing twelve issues in one year - working on four issues is already a lot of work. To be a successful editor one must have good discipline in corresponding with all parties involved in the publishing process, skill in filing and retrieving, tactfulness in dealing with authors and reviewers, knowledge of the subject matter, keen eyes to catch typographical errors and scientific notations, perseverance, adherence to meticulous details, some humor and acceptance of responsibilities in cases when things do not go as perfectly as planned, and, above all, have faith that at the end things will work out and the journal will be appreciated.

I certainly have enjoyed my role as the editor of this journal and I look forward to the next five years, and then ten years, and then who knows...

DANIEL Y.C. FUNG
Editor