Foundations for the Future

For the past months I have been asked innumerable times why I agreed to serve as Chief Editor of the *Journal of Neurophysiology*. It was actually an easy decision, precisely because the *Journal of Neurophysiology* has always represented many of the scientific and scholarly values and ideals that I hold precious. Our challenge now is to hold on to the core mission of the *Journal of Neurophysiology* while striving to make it even stronger than it is today.

The *Journal of Neurophysiology* has always been the premier journal for the publication of full-length reports in many areas of systems neuroscience while at the same time publishing numerous important papers in cellular neuroscience. Today the *Journal of Neurophysiology* publishes papers ranging from human functional imaging to the characterization of channels and currents. The expertise of the new cohort of Associate Editors reflects this gamut, and we will continue to publish excellent papers using disparate neurophysiological techniques to study the function of the nervous system of all animals. We welcome papers that complement neurophysiological studies with anatomical, biochemical, molecular, and computational approaches. We encourage papers that use physiological methods to study the development of the nervous system. We welcome papers that provide the connection between functional studies of the nervous system and neurological and psychiatric disorders. Many of the most important findings in neurophysiology come from the use of quantitative methods of data analysis and from models of nervous system structure and function. Therefore we invite computational and theoretical papers that are strongly tied to the physiological analysis of the brain and nervous system.

Many of the papers that constituted the foundations of new fields of study or defined new preparations and questions were published in the *Journal of Neurophysiology*. Foundational reports, by definition, must be strong enough to build on, are accompanied by appropriate controls, and allow the reader to see and appreciate the limitations of the data and the methods used to collect and analyze them. One of the core strengths of the *Journal of Neurophysiology* is that it has always permitted the publication of complete studies, without regard to the number of figures or words required (although of course most papers can benefit from judicious shortening for clarity). We will continue to publish excellent full-length papers. At the same time, we recognize the utility of short reports that constitute the first description of a novel finding or that can tell a story succinctly.

The excellence of a journal always depends on the quality of the work submitted to it. We hope that you, our readers and authors, will send us exciting and important scientific discoveries. In return, I, and the Associate Editors, pledge to do our utmost to ensure that the review process will be fair, rapid, and constructive. The *Journal of Neurophysiology* has always been known for its serious and responsible reviews. The purpose of the review process is to improve the technical quality, reliability, and clarity of the research literature, not to impose a single viewpoint on the field. Sloppy, incorrect, or unclear papers waste the time and effort of our community. High quality peer reviews provide the best mechanism to ensure that the data published in the *Journal of Neurophysiology* will provide appropriate foundations for future work in the years to come.

Maintaining excellence does not mean standing still, but rather moving with the times. On July 1, 2002 the *Journal of Neurophysiology* enters the era of full on-line manuscript submission and review. The benefits of all electronic submission and review are obvious. Nonetheless, there is always a learning curve for authors, reviewers, and editors as we switch systems. We ask all of our authors and reviewers in advance for indulgence with any glitches that may occur in the early months of the transition to full on-line function.

On behalf of all the authors and readers of the *Journal of Neurophysiology*, I would like to convey my deep appreciation for the many years of dedication and outstanding guidance that Peter Strick and his Associate Editors provided the *Journal of Neurophysiology*. I will do my best to capitalize on the momentum and reputation for excellence that Peter Strick has bequeathed us, and hope that all of you will participate in making the *Journal of Neurophysiology* well serve you, its constituency.

Eve Marder, Chief Editor