

Editorial

On Assuming the Helm

As my predecessor, Clark Larsen, noted in his farewell editorial, the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* has been published since 1918, making it one of the oldest anthropology journals in this country. Its publishing aims have always been broad—to represent all of physical anthropology. Physical anthropology can be defined in various ways (see Hrdlička's commentary in the first issue of the journal for an interesting historical survey up to that point, and Washburn (1951), who later became its fourth Editor, for a mid-century view). In its broadest sense it encompasses all studies of human and nonhuman primate biological variation, in both the present and the past, as well as living primate behavior, with the overall aim of better understanding the evolution of humankind. The journal continues to encourage submission of papers in all areas bearing on these questions—genetics, paleontology, bioarchaeology, physiological adaptation, growth and development, functional morphology, skeletal biology, and primatology.

Due to the Herculean efforts over the past several years of my editorial predecessor and our publisher, Wiley-Liss, there is no longer a back-log of papers at the *AJPA*. As a result, authors can expect that papers *submitted* now will be published in hard copy in less than a year, and on-line in as little as six months (barring major problems during revisions). This also means that we can begin to re-institute some editorial policies that were temporarily put on hold during the back-log period. In particular, we can again consider publishing special issues, or partial issues, devoted to specific topics and/or those arising from symposia. This is a good way to bring together recent developments in a particular subfield that would otherwise be scattered or covered only in review articles. I encourage you to submit your ideas and proposals in this regard. It should be noted that all papers incorporated in special issues will be subject to the same review process as currently exists for individual papers.

I would also like to encourage people to continue to submit ideas for Perspectives, the newest category of *AJPA* publications. These are another good way to present current “state of the art” syntheses and points of view on topical issues. Guidelines for submissions of this kind can be found in the on-line Author Guide, as well as in the original Announcement (Larsen, 2006).

I am very pleased to announce a change in policy regarding color illustrations in the *AJPA*. Beginning with the first issue of 2008, 20 print pages of color illustrations per year will be published free of charge to

authors, at the discretion of the Editor. Beyond this limit, color illustrations will be available at a reduced charge of \$500/page. Because the number of free color pages is limited, authors are urged to carefully justify any proposed use of color in their illustrations. On-line color versions of illustrations will remain free, as they are now. I thank Wiley-Liss for approving the new policy, which I think will significantly enhance the journal.

Please also continue to send suggestions for cover art for the journal. Most cover illustrations are associated with an article appearing in the *AJPA*, but that is not strictly necessary. Proposed entries on any topic related to physical anthropology are welcome.

Editorials beyond simple announcements at the transition between Editors have not been common in the *AJPA*: I can find only two examples in its history—one when Hrdlička initiated the journal, and one when T. Dale Stewart took over 25 years later. Since then there have been 10 Editors, and I am fortunate to have met almost all of them. They encompassed a wide range of research interests, but had one thing in common: they valued and encouraged good quality work in all subfields of physical anthropology. I am deeply honored to carry on this tradition, and look forward to working together with the *AJPA* editorial board, the AAPA membership, and all concerned scientists to publish the best possible papers on “the study of mankind as a whole, in its parts, and in its relations with the rest of nature” (Paul Broca, cited in Hrdlička, 1918, p. 4).

CHRISTOPHER Ruff
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Literature Cited

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