

— Editor's Note —

TO THE READERS OF JPE:

James Thomson*

Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Toronto, 25 Harbord Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 3G5

Although still young, the *Journal of Pollination Ecology* has established itself as a successful and vital conduit for research results, methodological advances, and—to some extent—opinion pieces concerning the diverse field of pollination biology. In a sense, it has been *too* successful, because the founding Editor-in-Chief, Carolin Mayer, has decided that she needs assistance in handling the increased volume of submissions and associated tasks. After deliberating, the board members of JPE have opted to try a new arrangement. I have accepted their invitation to join the effort as Editor-in-Chief, while Carolin's title will switch to Managing Editor. She will retain responsibility for the essential operation and production of the journal, while I will take on ultimate responsibility for evaluating submissions, finding reviewers, and establishing the content of the journal. Of course, I will depend heavily on the Associate Editors in this effort.

I anticipate a transitional period as I become familiar with the nuances of *JPE's* operation, and as I reorder my own priorities to give more time to the journal. I have announced my retirement from the University of Toronto as of 1 July 2018. Although I will still be supervising graduate students, conducting fieldwork, and keeping my lab running for several more years, I envision devoting an increasing share of my time and attention to *JPE*.

I am happy to help because I have personal reasons to appreciate the journal's existence. For much of my career, I wrestled with difficult decisions about where to submit papers. As an undergraduate in the early 1970s, my research direction was profoundly influenced by Daniel Janzen, whose focus on the evolutionary ecology of plant-animal interactions was so much more interesting to me than plain zoology, plain botany, plain evolution, plain ecology, or plain behaviour. Attempting to synthesize those approaches seemed intellectually proper and necessary, but such work seldom found a comfortable home in the journals of the day. Although I admired Janzen'schutzpah in publishing a heavily botanical account of passionflower floral biology in *Behaviour* (Janzen, DH. 1968. Reproductive behaviour in the Passifloraceae and some of its pollinators in Central America. *Behaviour* 32:33-48), that avenue did not strike me as broadly sustainable. Over decades of trying to find appropriate places for papers, I see that I (and my coauthors)

have now accumulated a life list of 52 journals! *American Naturalist* tops the list with nine papers, followed by *Ecology*, *American Journal of Botany*, and *Behavioral Ecology* with eight apiece. Oddball singletons went to sites as diverse *Animal Cognition*, *Parasitology*, and *Global Change Biology*. That may have been a good tactic for scent-marking an extensive territory, but it came at the cost of making an intensive impression on any one set of colleagues. I believe I became known as a jack-of-all-trades, when I would have been happier to be judged a master of one. Probably three-quarters of those papers could have been comfortably lodged in *JPE*. In fact, since 2010, eight of my papers have gone there.

Because of this history, my principal goal for *JPE* will be to preserve and enhance its status as the natural home for research papers concerning the interaction of flowers and pollen vectors, in the broadest sense conceivable. I construe the word "ecology" to include evolutionary implications and consequences. I want *JPE* to become the *journal of first resort* for those of us who share interests in plant-pollinator interactions. Beyond that, I hope that *JPE* will increasingly provide an intellectual forum for critical exchanges of unsettled or controversial topics. Under Carolin Mayer's editorship, the journal has already begun featuring critical commentary and rebuttals; I hope to expand this valuable function. Perhaps we will receive enough spontaneous submissions to launch meaningful debates; if not, in consultation with the board, I may offer some provocative editorials.

Aside from maintaining *JPE's* role as a platform for research results and debate, we need to shore up its respectability and to clearly differentiate it from the current, repugnant wave of phony, for-profit journals. Careful peer review must be maintained. The next most important step is to obtain an ISI listing, which we will launch immediately after announcing the editorial switchover. In parallel, we need to stabilize the journal's financial status with a new business plan. To date, *JPE* has managed to achieve completely open access while avoiding both page charges and subscription fees. That feat has rested on occasional grants and on heroic donations of volunteer effort by Carolin. For the future, however, we need a less perilous model; we need to reduce our dependence on the vagaries of grants, and the Managing Editor's position must become salaried.

We are presently investigating alternative business plans that can achieve these goals with as little damage as possible to the idealism of *JPE's* original conception. This might take

*Corresponding author: james.thomson@utoronto.ca

the form of affiliation with some umbrella organization such as BioOne or PLOS, or we might opt to retain our scrappy independence. It does seem likely that some publication charges or subscription fees will need to be levied. If so, I hope that we will be able to reduce costs to authors without access to research grants, perhaps in exchange for undertaking reviewing duties. I invite comments and suggestions, especially from knowledgeable individuals who have been involved with similar efforts in recent years.

To close, I will cite a remembered conversation from a social gathering associated with a symposium organized by Robert Wyatt (which gave rise to Robert's 1992 book *Ecology and Evolution of Plant Reproduction: New*

Approaches, Chapman and Hall). Michael Donohue, whose research in plant phylogeny made him something of an outlier among the invited researchers, said something to me like, "You pollination people seem strange to me—you all seem to *like* each other." Of course, Donohue's own field was still being roiled by the cladistics-phenetics debate and other sources of acrimony, so his view of pollination biologists may have been rosier than warranted. Still, it reflects my own impression that we *do* constitute a community in which disagreements about science seldom escalate into personal animosity or contempt. It is that relatively harmonious community that I hope *JPE* can serve and perpetuate.