The Journals of the American Physiological Society

The Journals of the American Physiological Society are its lasting contribution to science. Since the first days of the American Journal of Physiology, the Journals have been a paradigm of excellence in scientific communication. No library that serves physiologists, biologists, or physicians can do without them. No inventory of the present state of scientific reporting can ignore them. This continued preeminence over the years was not a simple feat because physiology has continued to change and the publications of the Society have had to adjust accordingly.

Matching the Journals to fresh interests and new horizons in physiology has always been the job of the Publications Committee. Each generation of new committee members has faced the same challenge of timeliness and excellence, and, over the years, each committee has resorted to different strategies to satisfy its obligation. New sections appeared in the American Journal of Physiology. When reshuffling and repackaging no longer sufficed, more drastic steps were taken: the Journal of Applied Physiology was split off from the parent Journal; the Journal of Neurophysiology was purchased and adapted to the needs of the Society.

These strategems worked well until the 1960’s. But, by then, specialization and fractionation were becoming the rule in physiology. The ranks of the “generalist” in physiology had grown thinner and thinner. Many new specialty journals began to appear under new sponsorship. Some were headed by members of the American Physiological Society. The new journals competed effectively with the American Journal of Physiology, the Journal of Applied Physiology, and the Journal of Neurophysiology for the best papers. Although the dedicated efforts of the Section Editors and of reviewers still sufficed to keep the journals of the Society in the forefront, it seemed clear to recent Publications Committees that a new mechanism had to be established by which the journals of the Society would surge into the lead again, not only in covering the broad perspectives of physiology but also in coping with the specialized needs of smaller constituencies within the Society.

In the process of restructuring the American Journal of Physiology, two new subtituent themes were identified: cell physiology; and regulatory, integrative, and comparative physiology. These reflect new directions that need coverage and cultivation in our journals. Equally important, provision has been made for accommodating other specialized aspects of physiology in our journals as the need arises.

In the process of restructuring the American Journal of Physiology, the Journal of Applied Physiology, and the Journal of Neurophysiology now provide unparalleled opportunity for publishing the results of original research in physiology. Subdivision of the parent journals provides for continued flexibility and accommodation to changing times. When viewed in conjunction with Physiological Reviews and
the *Handbooks of Physiology*, the publications of the Society now provide the broadest coverage of physiology in the world.

To top it all off, the *American Journal of Physiology*, the *Journal of Applied Physiology*, and the five component journals of the *American Journal of Physiology* have undergone a face-lift. New and attractive covers announce the independence and distinctive personalities of the seven journals. However, within the new covers, the format, the print, and the illustrations, which are unrivaled in legibility and attractiveness, are retained.

These revisions are the products of many years of exploration and deliberation. The new venture seems to provide the exhilarating prospect of retaining the best of the old while opening new doors for cultivation and presentation of the new. As this venture moves ahead, the Publications Committee would welcome the comments and advice of the members of the Society.

Alfred P. Fishman, *Chairman*
Publications Committee