

Farewell Editorial

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With this last issue of Volume 44, my six year term as Editor concludes. Michael Dietrich will become Editor in January, 2012, and the journal will move from Oregon State University to Dartmouth College. Ginny Domka, our Managing Editor, will also be concluding her term of service. Those of you who have corresponded with the journal, or who have published there, will be aware of the excellent job she has done in shepherding manuscripts through the editorial process, and answering questions. She has similarly been a welcoming and nurturing presence at professional meetings, and has helped to contribute to the reputation of the journal as a publication that welcomes and encourages serious scholarship from a wide range of authors. Oregon State University has been generous in its support of the journal. The Department of History has supplied space and financial assistance, and the Provost and Research Office have provided additional funds that have made conditions in the editorial office optimal. In these days of tight budgets, such institutional support is not to be taken for granted, and I greatly appreciate the support we have had at OSU.

I was a graduate student at Indiana University when Everett Mendelsohn published the first issue of the *JHB* (two issues a year back then), and the first article I published (1972) was in his journal. So, my entire career has, in a sense, been tied to this journal. I am far from alone in this. In looking over the issues of the *JHB*, from 1968 to 2011, one sees among the authors an international array of scholars, and also that the journal has often served as a debut publication. The articles, taken together, reflect the history of the emergence of the history of biology as a sub-discipline during the past four decades. The journal, of course, also mirrors changes in the broader discipline of history of science, although without the *Sturm und Drang* we have occasionally

experienced at meetings. The early years of this journal, like the general field of history of science, show the dominant influence of intellectual history, and in subsequent decades a gradual expansion of perspectives enlarged its scope. Although the journal has not been the locus of deep theoretical debate, implicit in the range of its articles has been an evolutionary development that suggests a growing maturity of the field. Social history, cultural history, philosophy of science, science policy studies, and technical and intellectual history have come together in different ways to produce sophisticated and exemplary scholarship. Such synthetic work raises the level of discourse, deepens our understanding, and augurs well for the future.

Contributors and readers of the *JHB* have been, and continue to be, highly diverse, and that strength has helped define the journal which supplies overviews as well as building blocks for understanding the rich history of the life sciences and its place in its cultural setting. The strength of a journal ultimately depends upon the quality and efforts of the contributors, and in that the *JHB* has been very fortunate. New technologies, some made available by the publisher, have enhanced the effectiveness of individual articles and have extended communication. Social media like Facebook are also beginning to contribute to strengthening the ties among those interested in the history of the life sciences. In the future, it will do so even more. We find ourselves, then,



Fig. 1. Past, present, and future editors. From left to right, Michael Dietrich, Jane Maienschein, Everett Mendelsohn, Gar Allen, Paul Farber

in an exciting time, and I look forward to reading future issues of the *JHB*.

Finally, on a personal note, I want to thank the many JHB authors who have made my six years as Editor so intellectually stimulating, as well as the many friends of the journal who have solicited manuscripts for the journal, contributed ideas, complained about shortcomings, and have supported the journal in so many other ways (Fig. 1).