Editorial

It is hard to believe that nearly four years have gone by. It was my intention to remain as Editor for another two years, but other circumstances intervened, and it is now necessary for me to step aside. A new editor has been appointed, to whom manuscripts should henceforth be addressed. *Psychobiology*, and its supporters, are lucky that Paul Gold, of the Department of Psychology, University of Virginia, is willing to take on this task. I am personally pleased because I want to see the gains we have made in the past few years preserved and expanded upon, and I feel Paul is an excellent choice to do just that. In discussing the past few years, and the changes we have made to this journal, I have repeatedly stressed the collaborative nature of this process. Those of you who have chosen to submit your work are to be thanked—I hope you were pleased with the way your manuscripts were treated. To my Associate Editors—Carol Barnes, Michela Gallagher, Bryan Kolb, and most recently Paul Gold—I express my gratitude for their help in this task and for contributing so heavily to whatever success we have achieved. Most important of all, my thanks go to Jeff Willner, the Assistant Editor. As everyone who has dealt with *Psychobiology* knows, Jeff did most of the hard work. Without his daily efforts, the journal simply would not have survived. As I became increasingly involved in departmental affairs, Jeff became increasingly essential to the functioning of the journal. One reason why I could not consider being both head of a department and Editor of *Psychobiology* is that Jeff is leaving Tucson, to move on to Chapel Hill. As far as the journal is concerned, après Jeff, le déluge.

It has been, on the whole, an exhilarating four years. Many of our hopes for the journal have been realized. Many of our dreams remain to be fulfilled, but it is satisfying to know that we have made some contribution to the future of *Psychobiology*—a future that I continue to feel is important to the health of the research domain at the interface between brain and behavior—and that the editorship will be passing into the capable hands of Paul Gold.

This issue contains a set of papers resulting from a workshop held at last year's Toronto meeting of the Society for Neuroscience. A brief introduction by Phil Best sets the stage for these articles. It is unfortunate that we could not wrest contributions from two other participants—John Kubie and John O'Keefe—which would have conveyed more accurately the balance of the workshop itself. As a participant in the various meetings that Phil refers to in his introduction, and something of a midwife to the meeting in Toronto, I was both impressed and depressed by the set of papers presented. I was impressed by the increasing precision with which "place" cells were being studied in various laboratories around the world. Such analyses offer hope that we will understand, in the not-too-distant future, many of the mechanisms underlying the hippocampal involvement in spatial learning and memory. I was, at the same time, depressed by the continued nit-picking about whether the hippocampus is "just" a spatial system, or even a spatial system at all.

It was possible for a nonexpert in the area to sit through the entire workshop and go away thinking that we still had no widely accepted ideas about what hippocampal cells are doing. This seems to me to misstate the situation. Phil Best refers to the book John O'Keefe and I wrote as a "classic." I'm afraid that if it deserves this title it is simply because it has been more frequently cited than read. John and I were at pains to emphasize the selective *memory* role of the hippocampus, within a modular perspective on memory functions, yet many persist in contrasting our "spatial" view with a "memory" view, as though these were antithetical. The elegant recent work of O'Keefe and Speakman should lay this false contrast to rest once and for all. We also were careful to delineate the very specific form of spatial memory the hippocampus was felt to be critically implicated

in, leaving a host of other spatial functions to other brain systems. Nonetheless, many insist that the demonstration of any spatial competence by organisms with damage in the hippocampus counts against our model. These complaints aside, it is a pleasure to publish in *Psychobiology* a set of articles dealing with hippocampal cellular activity, and I thank Phil Best for his efforts in bringing this project to fruition. The plans for this venture were cemented over many bottles of wine in a fine French bistro in Toronto, thus continuing a long and most enjoyable tradition in the "sea-horse" community. This tradition stretches back to early days in London, visits there by Jim Ranck and the sorely missed Abe Black, and many wonderful times and places since. One other thing an observer to the workshop might have noticed is the close friendship and fellowship existing among those working on hippocampal function, even when their theories might differ dramatically. It has been a pleasure to be part of this fellowship, and to continue it in the pages of this journal.

Lynn Nadel, *Editor*