EDITORIAL

Twenty-Five Years Old: Happy Birthday to *The Plant Cell*

The year 1989 was one of revolutionary changes: the Berlin Wall came down in November, and P.W. Botha quit as South African president in August. Tens of thousands of students rallied in Tiananmen Square, and later thousands were killed in the clampdown. Mikhail Gorbachev was named Soviet president, and President Nicolae Ceaușescu of Romania was overthrown and executed. In the same year, *The Plant Cell* began a minor revolution for plant biologists, by providing the first new journal of the era with a remit outside the traditional area of plant physiology, publishing plant research focused on genetic, molecular, and cell biology.

It is hard to believe that *The Plant Cell* is now 25 years old, but easier to appreciate the groundbreaking discoveries in plant biology that the journal has championed. These include cosuppression or gene silencing (the forerunners of RNAi), the control of flowering in *Arabidopsis* and other plants, the synthesis and structure of plant cell walls, systemic acquired resistance, programmed cell death, and plant defense mechanisms. The journal has become the highest ranking journal for the publication of primary research in the plant sciences and offers exceptional quality and space to publish outstanding articles that stand the test of time.

Is *The Plant Cell* showing its age? *The Plant Cell* continues to set and maintain standards that define the levels of excellence to which all scientists and journals should aspire. It established standards in statistical analysis (particularly of transcriptome data) to which most reputable journals now adhere. It has made mandatory the citing of author contributions such that readers can identify easily which authors were responsible for particular experiments—data that make the evaluation of contributions by review panels and granting agencies far more objective. Many other journals are now adopting this policy. *The Plant Cell* has removed the option of citing “data not shown” as often synonymous with “data not done,” and, again, many journals are now following this lead. *The Plant Cell* has developed an exhaustive (and exhausting) set of instructions for authors to guide them through submission and publication procedures as well as ethical issues associated with publishing. The journal has established the innovative Teaching Tools in Plant Biology to bring research closer to the classroom and to encourage educators to provide the very best peer-reviewed, current information on selected topics in plant biology. The Teaching Tools have become adopted widely as educational resources and are helping to recruit new people to the field.

*The Plant Cell* continues to innovate in structuring its publishing model, despite the needs of ASPB for revenue from its journals to support its education, outreach, and public affairs activities. We have introduced a flat rate charge for articles in 2014 that should see costs fall for authors, and, in preparation for online-only content as of January 2015, all charges for color images have been removed. The journal ensures full availability of all its research content 12 months after the date of publication, and for those authors who wish to make their article immediately accessible, only a modest surcharge is levied. *The Plant Cell* and *Plant Physiology* introduced Utopia to link articles to underlying data sets and to facilitate access to online resources relating to content. *The Plant Cell* has encouraged authors wishing to comment on long-standing scientific disputes in the literature to present their arguments to the scientific community through peer-reviewed commentaries to which all sides to the debate can contribute. The journal has also opened its pages to more technical content through its Large-Scale Biology feature, which is increasingly well cited.

So, *The Plant Cell* has had an eventful quarter century! And by all accounts, it looks to be in good shape for the next 25 years. Happy Birthday to *The Plant Cell*!

Cathie Martin
Editor in Chief
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