

## Editorial

### So you want to be an Editor Eh?



With the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of JMATE complete, we met our more reasonable expectation of getting 2 issues out in 2009. Hurrah! With that milestone

accomplished I thank my editorial staff and reflect on the joy and experience of being an editor - with apologies to serious editors everywhere. Perhaps some of you can relate to what I will go on to share with you. I must say, like everything else in life, I now have an even greater respect for publishers and editors everywhere. This of course will make me an even more dutiful author in all my future publications, having experienced the 'other side'. So allow me to entertain you with a hopefully amusing yet new take on the evolution of JMATE. Once again our many thanks to all the authors and reviewers who chiseled out time to contribute to JMATE's successful second year – this one's for you!

I propose to you the concept of publication is much like the stages of pregnancy. Prior to even the first trimester is the planning of the 'baby' and its conception, which for JMATE was deciding its niche and what style to give it so that it could best accomplish the decided mandate. Then with that accomplished, or pregnancy confirmed, one would think the worst is over as all that is needed is to see the finished product. However, as we all know, nothing is so simple and so we move to other aspect of the publication development process or the actual stages of pregnancy, which in the human case, has three trimesters.

During the 'first trimester' of "JMATE" pregnancy, publication submissions arrive and at first glance all seems well. The Associate Editor begins the process of setting up reviews and verifying the completeness of the submission. Here is where missing copyright forms are identified or

incomplete forms arrive that have missing authors, signatures or other issues that require follow-up. Then on to the manuscript itself and how well (or not well) instructions to authors were followed. As an author, everyone is frustrated with each journal having their own style and format. On the editorial staff side, there are equal frustrations as they try to ensure consistency and clarity across all the manuscripts that will eventually be published.

Then, as JMATE is a peer review journal, during the 'second trimester' papers undergo peer review. They are sent to targeted reviewers who have the expertise required to look at that particular paper and provide suggestions on how best to improve it. This can vary from quite quick to long time delays due to a variety of issues. These include setbacks such as individual reviewers who, for one reason or other, could not do the review as they either are out in the field or have personal reasons that makes that particular time inconvenient. This requires a re-evaluation of who will review the paper and sending it to another reviewer, restarting the review clock. Finally with the co-operation of our reviewers, suggestions come back and we are able to forward these to the authors to address and modify their paper. This again takes some time, though our experience is that authors want the paper accepted and published so they tend to be fairly quick in their turnaround revisions.

The 'third trimester' initiates when, upon receipt of the revised paper, our editors read for flow and clarity. This leads to the decision on final acceptance, with or without further modifications. Stylistic and writing changes will now be done to the paper by our editorial staff and then a galley proof is created; formatted to the typical double column style and pictures, tables and other figures inserted. This is then sent to the corresponding author for the final verification that nothing was lost during the last editing. Normally no other changes are accepted at this stage. However, for quality of the journal and



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pride of our staff and authors, should an error be caught, it is addressed. This of course once again sets back the publication as changes at this stage are laborious.

Once all this has been accomplished, the 'birthing' process ensues. Our staff puts the next issue together with its various sections, arranging final page numbers and sending it on to our webmaster to be uplinked to the JMATE page on our website. Finally it is done, and like proud parents of the new baby, the next issue is out and everyone is beaming. The authors realize their dream of sharing their information, the editorial staff breathes a sigh of relief and everyone agrees it looks fantastic.

As one can see there are many stages to the process of putting together and running a journal, any one of which can result in time delays and setbacks. But on the upside, the rewards of seeing the completed issue out in the public domain to be read and referenced are worth every minute of time spent in this endeavor. It results in the author's work getting known and we hope it all contributes further to our understanding of marine animals and their environment. So we, as proud parents, strive to do our very best with each issue and our baby JMATE, a young journal, continues on its road toward achieving that goal.

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Editor-in-Chief, JMATE

