Onward and upward

Gerald F Joyce

This issue marks the beginning of the sixth volume of publication of *Chemistry & Biology* and a time when the journal is moving from its exuberant childhood to an emboldened adolescence. It also marks the end of my term as Associate Editor. Gregory Verdine, Patrick Baeuerle, and Peter Leadlay will continue as Associate Editors and I am pleased to announce that Thomas Kodadek of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center will soon be joining them.

Chemistry & Biology and the field of chemical biology have grown up together over the past five years. The surge of activity in areas such as combinatorial chemistry, enzyme engineering, and the study of receptor–ligand interactions is apparent from the increasing number and quality of submissions that the journal has received. Recently *Chemistry & Biology* was given its first impact rating by the ISI Journal Citation Report, pertaining to the first two years of the journal's publication. The impact factor of 5.796 is impressive, placing *Chemistry & Biology* in the company of such well-established journals as *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, *Biochemistry*, and *Journal of Molecular Biology*. It is almost certain that our impact factor will increase in the coming years as papers that appeared over successive years are considered in the score.

More important than an impact score is the significance of the published science. *Chemistry & Biology* has published many innovative and influential papers that have helped to shape the field of chemical biology. Given my background, I am especially pleased by the outstanding papers that we have published in the areas of nucleic-acid enzymology and *in vitro* selection. For example, *Chemistry & Biology* has become the premier journal for papers pertaining to the role of metals in nucleic acid catalysis. These areas of focus will continue and will, I'm sure, be augmented by increasing attention to small molecule–nucleic acid interactions and the perturbation of gene expression at the level of nucleic acids. In addition, the journal will maintain a strong presence in other rapidly developing areas of chemical biology, such as the engineering of metabolic pathways, the design of synthetic and semi-synthetic enzymes and the application of chemical synthesis to functional genomics.

When discussing *Chemistry & Biology* with colleagues and soliciting their opinions of the journal, the two most common negative comments that I have heard are: "There isn't enough chemistry" and "There isn't enough biology." So we must be doing something right! On the other hand, the mission of the journal is not to publish papers that lie squarely on the border between chemistry and biology. Rather, we hope to draw on the best of both disciplines in addressing topics that are of common interest. In future issues of *Chemistry & Biology* you can expect to see more papers that involve synthetic organic chemistry with an eye towards biological applications, as well as more that pertain to cellular processes that can be modulated by chemical intervention.

Everyone seems to agree about the positive features of *Chemistry & Biology*. Our average turnaround time from the date of submission to the date of publication is miraculous. This is accomplished through the diligence of the editorial staff and conscientiousness of the referees. I like to think that it takes no more effort to edit or review a manuscript in a timely manner than to allow it to languish on a desk, put up with the nagging from our friendly editorial staff, and end up doing the same amount of work at a later time. In achieving rapid turnaround, we have never compromised the quality of the published science; we have simply eliminated the dead time between steps in the review process. Rapid communication is a benefit not only to the authors but also to our readers who are trying to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field.

Another widely praised feature of *Chemistry & Biology* is its high production standards, including text editing of every manuscript, careful attention to page layout, and, of course, color figures throughout. During the first year of the journal's publication, an esteemed synthetic organic chemist remarked to me "Any figure that cannot be shown in black and white is not worth showing." That may be true, but the tasteful use of color can make a paper more accessible to a broad audience. Happily, the individual who made the comment has since published one of the most striking color figures that has ever appeared in the journal.

I must thank my friends and colleagues at *Chemistry & Biology* for the adventure that we have shared over the past five years. I am grateful to Stuart and KC for establishing the highest scientific standards for the journal and to Becky Ward for getting the entire operation on its feet. The In-house

Editors, first in San Francisco and now in London, have worked tirelessly to establish the journal's reputation. My fellow Associate Editors, especially my partner from the outset, Greg Verdine, have shared graciously in the workload and have maintained tough but consistent standards regarding what is acceptable for publication.

Lastly, I am grateful to you, the contributors and subscribers to *Chemistry & Biology*. You are the main reason for the journal's success. Your scientific ingenuity has created a wave of progress at the interface between chemistry and biology that has carried the journal forward. I hope that you brighten up whenever a new issue of *Chemistry & Biology* appears in your mailbox and that every issue contains something that piques your interest and perhaps influences the direction of your research. I am sure that *Chemistry & Biology* will get even better in the years ahead.