Biochemistry. The change of name reveals much of the editors' laudable intention: to cover membranes "from the biophysics of membrane components to the cell biology of their functions".

This is a bold attempt at tackling a vertical section through biology. The increasing progress 'downwards', as cell biology falls prey to molecular methods, means that the subject is becoming more physical. A good example is the process of fusion of vesicles with their target membrane in eukaryotes: most of the participating proteins are probably known, but understanding how they cause lipid bilayers to fuse is a distinctly biophysical problem. So there is a clear niche for a journal that can speak to biophysicists, biochemists and cell biologists in the same language.

Is *Molecular Membrane Biology* such a voice? Perhaps not yet, but there are encouraging signs. The balance of papers so far, understandably considering the journal's origins, seems skewed away from the cell-biological end (four random issues contain three light- or electron- micrographs of cells), but there have been good contributions on membrane protein structure and assembly. The general format of papers is conventional apart from having experimental procedures at the end, an irritating feature copied from some trendy journals. (Whose idea was it that a result is best appreciated if the reader has no idea how it was obtained?) Time from acceptance to publication is 4–6 months, creditable considering both the apparent absence of electronic submission and the quarterly publication rate (it is the editors' avowed intention to increase this frequency).

One questionable policy was the decision to devote an issue to a meeting: not only did the issue appear some ten months after the event but the publishable contents of the meeting would presumably have appeared anyway. Incredibly, the first page is a verbatim welcome from the conference manager, beginning "Good morning, I'm Phil. . ." and ending "I will not take any more of your time. . .".

Such lapses will doubtless not recur. *Molecular Membrane Biology*, unlike many new journals, is a good idea, and with vision and ambition it should earn a precious place in the library. □

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Dead cells give up their secrets

Graham Dunn

Cell Vision: Journal of Analytical Morphology. Editor-in-chief Jiang Gu. *Eaton, 154 E. Central St, Natwick, Massachusetts 01760, USA. 6/yr. USA $125, Europe $145, elsewhere $150.*

HUMPTY-Dumpty might well have said of the name *Cell Vision* that "it means just what I choose it to mean, — neither more nor less". The new journal's subtitle — *Journal of Analytical Morphology* — would seem to be more informative were it not that any paper submitted from the Great Beyond by the founding father of analytical morphology, D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, would very probably be rejected by the editors. In fact, potential contributors to *Cell Vision* should know that its editor-in-chief does not use morphology in its defined sense, to mean the study of biological shape or form, but apparently takes it to signify the location of various molecular species in tissue sections and cell smears.

The clearest way of understanding which disciplines the journal serves is by scanning its contents. The editor-in-chief has himself reverted to this foolproof technique in the first issue of Volume 2, where he states that comprehensive review articles have covered the topics of *in situ* polymerase chain reaction (PCR), immunogold–silver staining, confocal microscopy, microwave technology and antigen retrieval, while research and technical topics have included self-sustained sequence-replication-based *in situ* DNA amplification, reverse-transcription *in situ* PCR, computer-assisted cytopathological diagnosis and modified immunohistochemical procedures.

Overall, the review articles (4–8 pages) and technical articles (3–10 pages) are highly informative and lavishly illustrated (at only $200 per colour plate) and the first issue seems to be a good laboratory manual for those wishing to experiment with *in situ* PCR, an exquisitely sensitive technique for detecting and locating foreign genes in tissues and cells.

Research articles (3–12 pages) have a strong bias towards clinical pathology, as does the editorial board, and case reports (1–6 pages) provide a forum for "morphologic observations on human or experimental samples, preferably using modern morphologic methodologies". The five editors have obviously put a lot of hard work into launching the journal, contributing no fewer than 16 articles, 9 proceedings and 15 abstracts of their own to the 6 issues that I scanned, but it is to be hoped that their Herculean effort need not be sustained as circulation increases.

During my survey it became clearer that "modern morphologic methodologies" refers to the latest cell- and tissue-labelling techniques descended from those 'ologies' whose names are evidently too venerable to utter: h*st*l*gy and c*t*l*gy. So, although not stated explicitly, the chief criterion for publication in *Cell Vision* appears to be that vision may not be practised on cells before they are dead. Those of us who choose to apply our vision to living cells should not feel smug, however, because the range and depth of information now obtainable from dead cells using the sophisticated techniques reported in *Cell Vision* are truly impressive. □

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Letters and paper

Mike Gidley

Carbohydrate Letters. Editor-in-chief Pierre G. Sinay. *Harwood Academic. 6/yr. ECU54, $65.*
Cellulose. Editor-in-chief John C. Roberts. *Chapman and Hall. 4/yr. USA and Canada $230, Europe £135, elsewhere £145.*

CARBOHYDRATES are structurally complex and diverse molecules that can have a profound and pervasive influence on life processes. They are increasingly attracting the attention of researchers in both biological and physico-chemical sciences, as confirmed by the appearance of these two new journals.

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Roll-ups: paper manuscripts for recycling.

Carbohydrate Letters seeks to provide a home for new developments across the panoply of disciplines and covers all classes of carbohydrates. Papers are invited in camera-ready form to lessen delays between acceptance and publication. In practice, although some papers appear within a month of acceptance, most are published after a delay of six months or so. So far, the primary subject areas covered lie at the chemistry–biochemistry interface, with particular emphasis on synthesis strategies. The quality of articles is high and compares favourably with established journals in the field. A publication