

**Publications Committee Spring Meeting  
Conference Call  
May 2, 2019**

**Present: Neil Olszewski (chair), Katayoon Dehesh, Pam Hines, Hong Ma, Craig Schenk, Steve Theg. Staff: Crispin Taylor (CEO), Jennifer Regala (Managing Editor), Nancy Winchester (Director of Publications)**

All participants introduced themselves and welcomed our first early-career member, Craig Schenk.

Nancy asked to append a brief discussion of the highlights of the April 30 Plant Direct meeting to the agenda. Neil agreed. The agenda was approved.

**1. TAB (The Arabidopsis Book).** Rob Last, president, had suggested a year ago that perhaps it was time to “preserve TAB in amber.” Actually, the fate of TAB had been discussed at various levels for a few years. A discussion of various efforts over the years to invigorate TAB followed. The decision was to suspend publication of updates and new articles permanently.

**ACTION ITEM: SHOULD THE ARABIDOPSIS BOOK CEASE PUBLICATION? The decision was unanimously in favor of shutting down TAB.**

**2. BOT/BOD request for exploration of a licensing agreement with a commercial publisher or university press.** Crispin led this discussion. Since 1926, we have self-published. Reasons to consider a partnership include leveraging economies of scale, ensuring financial stability during tumultuous times in scholarly publishing, and having a partner to help us negotiate the rapidly changing Open Access landscape.

Neil added that the Board of Directors and Board of Trustees had asked Nancy on March 30 to do the research. Pubs needs to weigh in and report to the boards. Critical to any partnership is that we not lose control of the things that are important to us.

Nancy asked about the process and timeline. What do the boards want from us in August at the Plant Biology meeting? Neil, Crispin, and Nancy will talk with Judy Callis, the president-elect.

**ACTION ITEM: Nancy is to circulate a list of plant journals already in these arrangements.**

**3. Author Survey.** Neil explained that about a year ago, we decided to look at what we do well, and what we could do better to better serve ASPB and the community as well as to address instability in publishing and remain competitive. Nancy gave information on the survey (deadline varies per region of the world; last deadline is May 10; we had 39,000 records and 33,000 turned out to be viable (or at least did

not decline to take the survey); we are projecting a 14% response rate, which is good. Neil said that the consultant's analysis should go to Pubs Comm, the EiCs, and Sally Mackenzie. The Editors may want to distribute it to their boards. But the analysis, which we paid for, must not be shared with our competitors. Jennifer noted that the survey would be on the PP board agenda for June 8. It will also be on the Pubs Comm agenda for San Jose, but everyone will have the analysis in hand well before then (late May most likely). We will need an intro along the lines of "the Author is our North Star." Beyond the author, we hope that this survey will help ASPB's footprint overall in engaging scientists doing plant science research in general, not just our authors. Neil characterized it as an "author/reader survey."

**4. bioRxiv/TPC Pilot.** John Inglis, director of the Cold Spring Harbor Press, invited us to engage in a pilot with just a few other high-profile journals in publishing peer review reports alongside preprints of articles that eventually were published in our journals. The premise is that this is all scholarship, and making it open is a good thing. A discussion of preprints followed. *The Plant Cell* will participate as it already publishes Peer Review Reports.

**5. Plant Direct Meeting Overview.** The management committee convened at ASPB on Tuesday, April 30. Nancy gave some highlights:

- Ivan has been offered and accepted a second three-year term beginning in 2020.

- Content will be visible in PubMed beginning in June 2019, but we're not indexed in Medline because we have to have about 20% public health content. We are indexed in SCOPUS. We are waiting on Clarivate regarding Web of Science and an impact factor...a process that takes longer these days than the four years we traditionally expected for a new journal.

- There is interest in widening the net of "feeder journals." They would not become owners; we would not alter the contract. But we could devise a royalty arrangement for referrals. Pamela Mortimer, CEO at SEB, has already approached the board of J. Ex. Bot., and there is interest.

- Ivan requests that the Pubs-sponsored workshop at PB2020 be on *Plant Direct*. He would alternate years at the PB meeting with SEB's meeting.

- Wiley and Ivan have developed a detailed table of goals, outcomes, and tactics that the management committee helped flesh out during the meeting.

- The journal made money in 2018.

**6. Any Other Business?** Steve inquired about Mike's term. It ends December 2021, so we'd start a search in spring 2020, name a successor at the end of 2020, and allow a year for copilotting.

**There was no other business.**

**The meeting adjourned at 5:52 pm.**