



## EDITORIAL: THE ORIGINS OF NEUROGENETICS

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## EDITORIAL: THE ORIGINS OF NEUROGENETICS

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Over the past 5–10 years, it has become widely acknowledged that genetic approaches are critical to understand not only how brain circuitry generates perception and behavior, but also how circuitry and behavior are altered through evolution, by experience, and in disease. Indeed, these approaches have been adopted by many research groups and are well articulated in the mission of Janelia Farm, HHMI's new research campus.

However, Neurogenetics was not always so appreciated. In the early and middle years of this journal, views that are currently in vogue represented the “lunatic fringe” of science. It is possible to argue that this classification was not entirely unjustified. Many fundamental questions in neuroscience are now more tractable than they have ever been because of a host of recently invented technologies and new knowledge. And the sanity of those who address intractable, albeit profound, questions can be fairly brought into question.

But after reviewing 25 years of history during a long afternoon spent in our editorial chairs, it seems fair to acknowledge that those in the lunatic fringe of yesterday were more foresighted than misguided. Indeed, a brief scan of even this collection of older papers published in the *Journal of Neurogenetics* shows how yesterday's fringe contributed substantially, even if only indirectly in some cases, to the more refined approaches of today.

We produce this special retrospective issue of the Journal for three reasons.

- First, to demonstrate, as much to ourselves as to the interested reader, that the Journal has served as a significant forum for the publication of papers in the broad field of Neurogenetics. Additional papers to be individually reprinted in future issues will further enhance this point.

- Second, as the *Journal* is taken over by a new editorship, to acknowledge the extraordinary contributions in science and service made by Jeff Hall, the outgoing editor, to the field of neurogenetics. In addition to the present collection of papers (and those to be highlighted in subsequent issues), we present four personal tributes to Jeff, written by his colleagues, who have experienced first-hand his amazing knowledge, insight, inspiration and lack of pretension. We thank Jeff for his unflagging effort and inspiration and his years of work and effort to bring the *Journal of Neurogenetics* to where it is today.
- Finally, and most importantly, to announce the new editorship's commitment to produce an intellectually vigorous and forward-looking journal that will continue to publish papers, ideas, commentaries and perspectives on Neurogenetics, interpreted in the widest sense of the word. A "draft" of the Aims and Purposes is provided in this issue, as well as on the *Journal's* website ([www.informaworld.com/gneg](http://www.informaworld.com/gneg)). We welcome all feedback and suggestions from our readership.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to your support of the *Journal* over the coming years.

*Chun-Fang Wu* (Editor-in-Chief)

*Mani Ramaswami* (Guest Editor)

## **Aims and Purposes**

Under new editorship in 2007, the *Journal of Neurogenetics* will continue to publish papers involving the genetics of behavior, neural function or development, interpreted in the broadest sense. The *Journal* may be particularly appropriate for papers on behavioral, biochemical or cellular aspects of neural function, plasticity, aging or disease. In addition to analyses in the traditional genetic-model organisms, *C. elegans*, *Drosophila*, Mouse and the Zebrafish, the *Journal* encourages submission of neurogenetic investigations performed in organisms not easily amenable to experimental genetics. Such investigations might, for instance, describe behavioral differences deriving from genetic variation within a species or document linkage of specific human SNPs to behavioral traits. In addition to Original Articles, the *Journal* will also publish Short Communications, Hypotheses, Commentaries and Reviews, as well as Meeting Reports, or groups of abstracts associated with Neurogenetics conferences that occur on a regular basis.

In an attempt to energize the *Journal*, the new editorship: a) has revised the presentation and mechanisms of access to the Journal; and b) makes the following commitments to prospective authors.

1. To provide a fair and constructive peer review of manuscripts submitted.
2. To ensure that accepted manuscripts appear in the production process within *six weeks* of final acceptance.
3. To provide rapid editorial review of papers previously reviewed by other journals.
4. To allow authors maximal latitude in discussing the wide implications of their work and, when duly qualified, encourage discussions that question current models.
5. To improve representation of research from countries outside Europe and North America.