

THE HUMAN ETHOLOGY BULLETIN

Almost a year ago, I was asked to take over the Human Ethology Bulletin as Editor in Chief. I accepted this challenge, knowing that establishing a new journal would involve substantial time and work, but my vision of the Bulletin justified any effort for making this happen.

From the very beginning, I was part of the transition process of the Bulletin. The importance of this transition and the radical nature of the change must be emphasized; the Bulletin went from being a communicative organ of the International Society for Human Ethology into a fully peer-reviewed, open access online journal.

The decision to transition the Bulletin was made at the ISHE conference in Madison, 2010. Aurelio Jose Figueredo, who was the Editor in Chief then, asked people interested in being part of the journal to join him for lunch so we could speak about ideas and practicalities. This informal meeting led to the identification of some key players of the Bulletin.

But having a group of enthusiastic scholars engaged with an idea represents only a starting point. After this first lunch, a tedious process began. Not only did we have to deal with the technical details establishing an online journal, but we also had to find agreement on the content. Guidelines for authors were suggested, modified and finally accepted. Indeed, the whole procedure of the steps necessary from initial submission to publication was outlined, and numerous small details had to be handled, one at a time.

Aurelio took on the challenge of dealing with all these issues, and amassed a very heterogenous editorial board. He was the editor of the Bulletin in a very difficult time, and we regret that he had to step down for health reasons. Under his lead, the first issues of the Bulletin were published online on the new journal website.

From the very beginning, I found the variety of topics of the submissions to the Bulletin encouraging. I think in this way, the Bulletin very much echoes what ISHE represents as a scientific association: Observation of human behavior and evolutionary theory are the unifying elements for scholars from a great range of scientific backgrounds. One of the unique characteristics of this journal may be that it embodies a stage for research which introduces new ideas and novel facets of human behavior.

Recent publications in the areas of human ethology and evolutionary psychology are dominated by research in two main areas: Attractiveness and mate choice. While these themes are surely interesting and important, they are – by far – not all that should be studied about evolved human behavior. For example, evolved social strategies go far beyond mating, as our evolutionary history of being social animals is long: We have good reasons to assume that the social skills needed for the establishment and maintenance of alliances date back well before the last common ancestor of apes and humans. Cognitive adaptations evolved in the environment of evolutionary adaptedness offer explanations for decision processes we observe in humans today. Lastly, physical properties of environments affect our behavior, cognition and general wellbeing, and a better understanding of these interactions can contribute by advising the design of human-made elements in our environments. The list of potential topics to explore is vast.

If you take a look at the papers that have appeared in the Bulletin so far, it is obvious, that this journal is a platform for research on human behavior in this broad sense. I would love to see that this young tradition keeps growing, and that we can contribute to widening the research focus of people interested in human behavior. Therefore, to be clear, my vision for the Bulletin is that we keep in mind the necessity for observational studies, and encourage research that represents the diversity of human behavior.

The Bulletin is still work in process, and will always be. The Editorial Board is growing, and now includes the newly appointed Associate Editors Louise Barrett, Jan Havlicek, Craig Roberts and Susanne Schmehl who add their expertise, and reflect the broad range of scientific fields we aim to address.

Iris Holzleitner stepped down as Book Review Editor after having served in this function for over two years. I would like to thank her for her professional work. Maryanne Fisher has agreed to take over her duties, now switching roles from Associate to Book Review Editor. We have developed a step-by-step guide for the submission system, and continue to optimize the whole process of the workings of the journal.

Starting with this issue, the Editor and/or members of the Editorial Board will contribute a letter. In addition to information about the developments of the journal, there will also ideas about the future of human ethology, or reflections on our field.

In the very near future, we introduce a new layout for the articles published in the Human Ethology Bulletin. The past year has been an exciting one, and has led to this layout.

I am fully aware that we still have a way to go until the Bulletin is soundly established in the scientific community. We are taking all the necessary steps for getting the Bulletin listed in scholarly search engines and lists, most important of all ISI listing for impact points. These processes take a while. New journals are being founded weekly, and thus proof of a journal's worth is needed before indexing. I am determined to achieve this goal within the next year or so.

The Bulletin can only be a valuable addition to our scientific fields if we all continue to contribute to it. There are many ways to do so: You can register as a reviewer, you can submit manuscripts, you can advertise the Bulletin among scholarly colleagues, and you can volunteer to review recent books. Encourage your students to work with you on a review, or to submit a publication. If you are interested in contributing, please to not hesitate to contact me or one of the Associate Editors!

I wish you all a restful summer, with many great ideas and opportunities to carry out interesting research on human behavior!

Elisabeth Oberzaucher
Editor in Chief