

## Editorial

### Peer Review and the Editor

A science journal editor is responsible for the scientific content of his/her journal. Clearly, this responsibility does not require the editor to agree with or endorse information and/or opinions expressed by the contributing authors, but the editor is obliged to establish that published papers adhere to sound scientific practices. For almost two hundred years, editors have relied on the process of anonymous, expert peer review to provide advice on the suitability for publication. Most reputable journals have become so because of proper and effective use of peer review. Periodically, questions arise about the ethics of an editor publishing in the journal which he/she edits. Unfortunately, more than one editor has viewed the chief editorial position as an opportunity to publish work with little or no peer input. This is inappropriate and unethical. The other extreme is to refrain from submitting work to the journal during the period of editorship. That seems odd to me, because an invitation to run a journal is probably most often based on previous support of the journal as an author and reviewer. I argue that it is important for the editor to continue to publish work in the journal. This is normally achieved by establishing a 'blind' peer review process, operated by a designated editorial board member or outside researcher. This ensures the same rigour of anonymous peer review afforded to all contributors. My first paper in **Davidsonia** was published in 1980 (Taylor, 1980) so the paper in this issue is my first publication in the journal since I became editor. Whether the paper is of high or low quality is for readers to judge, but the opinions of peer reviewers were sought and revisions made as would be expected for any scientific submission.

Peer reviewers are representatives of the scientific community. Their job is to give the editor advice on originality, scientific adequacy and the substantive nature of the work. The editor is not obliged to listen, but should have good reason if he/she chooses to ignore the advice. If a journal is to have a viable future, the community of authors, peer reviewers and other

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editors must have the assurance that it adheres to established science publishing processes.

We are on this path at **Davidsonia**.

### References

Taylor, I.E.P. 1980. British Columbian Plants in Winter. *Davidsonia* 11: 65-71.