

Editorial

The First Eight Years (2013-2020) of *Life: The Excitement of Biology*

Jorge A. Santiago-Blay¹

This is my annual summary of the major developments of *Life: The Excitement of Biology*, emphasizing 2020. Shortly after my celebratory, “We are caught up!”, which I wrote after completing volume 8 in April of 2020, came precisely the opposite, the driest drought of papers received in my 21 years as editor of peer-reviewed scientific venues, extending from April 2020 until October 2021. Perhaps, this scarcity of submitted papers was related to the COVID pandemic, as suggested by some colleagues. However, since November 2021, there has been a flurry of papers received, some of which have been already accepted, and are herein published.

What do we do in Life: The Excitement of Biology?

1. *Synthesize and innovate.* When an author submits a paper to *LEB*, I consider such contribution an act of scientific and artistic creation. I consider it my job, and that of the reviewers, to respectfully and constructively offer suggestions to improve the paper. In other words, as much as possible, I encourage reviewers to offer specific feedback, not just, for example, say “use statistics”. The reviewers and I provide fast and constructive feedback to authors. The ultimate goal is to synthesize ideas clearly as often innovation happens through collaborations.
2. *Foster intrinsic and purposeful motivation.* I try to encourage motivation as well as autonomy, leading to as complete a coverage of the subject matter as possible within the time frame the author may have. In other words, I hope that an author would want to create something of which the author will be proud. This is similar to what I tell students in my courses. Placing my hand close to the bottom of my chest to illustrate level of achievement, I often tell them, “An ‘A’ in Dr. Blay’s course is here. You and I will forget about the paper you wrote for my class.” Then, moving my hand above my head, I continue by saying, “Getting a paper published is at this level and your paper is then saved for history, thus, you want to do a thorough job.”

What are some characteristics of Life: The Excitement of Biology?

LEB is a peer-reviewed, international, scientific quarterly journal with broad subject coverage, emphasizing biology. The vision of the journal is to provide

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the global scientific community as well as the broad public with diverse, high-quality, readable, and interesting articles on a wide variety of biological and related interdisciplinary scientific topics. The mission of *Life: The Excitement of Biology* is to promote broad and deep understanding of all forms of life, such as bacteria, plants, fungi, animals, and others at all levels of the biological hierarchical organization, from the atomic to the biospheric. *LEB* also promotes understanding of the evolution of life, from its earliest records to its current manifestations on Earth – or elsewhere. Importantly, *Life: The Excitement of Biology* aims to communicate in a style that is accessible to a wide audience and at the same time maintains academic rigor and scholarly review.

Working with authors in a helpful and collaborative spirit, *Life: The Excitement of Biology* tries to be varied and it welcomes papers that are novel or that discuss topics that may be considered controversial. The journal is packaged in such a way to make it colorful and attractive. As Editor-in-Chief, I enjoy providing opportunities to all authors who may have something constructive to say about a topic pertaining to sciences, especially biology. Although *LEB* has a fairly standard style, I offer authors choices to accommodate them as much as possible. Also, from time to time, I try to inject playful notes, such as cartoons and interesting images.

Accomplishments during 2020

1. **Impact Factor from Research Gate and dramatic increase in the number of visits.** As best as I can estimate, in the spring of 2019, *LEB* was awarded an impact factor by Research Gate. In 2020, the total number of visits to the web page, <https://blaypublishers.com>, greatly surpassed that of 2019 and 2021 is projected to be on par with that of 2020. Also, the average number of pages clicked per visit in 2021 will be higher than ever in the existence of *Life: The Excitement of Biology*.
2. **Increased indexing and referencing.** *Life: The Excitement of Biology* continues to be indexed and its published articles detected by *Biosis*, *Biological Abstracts*, *CAB Abstracts*, *Google Scholar*, *Research Gate*, and others. During 2021, the number of units abstracting and/or indexing *LEB* continued to be in the several dozens. Blay Publishers LLC continues participating in CrossRef and, as a consequence, papers published in *Life: The Excitement of Biology* have a digital object identifier (doi) and as many of the references as possible are endowed with a doi enabling readers to rapidly find references cited in the literature cited portion of papers.
3. **Increased Internationalization.** A few more scholars joined the Board of Editors of *Life: The Excitement of Biology* during 2020 and 2021 replacing several colleagues who can no longer help us. Currently, the board has over 100 members representing over 40 countries worldwide. As usual, I am

constantly looking for competent colleagues from any area of biology and wholeheartedly welcome scholars from countries less represented in the Board of Editors.

4. **Presence via Social Media.** *Life: The Excitement of Biology* retains a strong digital presence through, *WordPress*, its digital carrier at <https://blaypublishers.com> . Also, **LEB** maintains a presence, particularly through email, *Facebook* (Jorge A. Santiago-Blay), *LinkedIn* (Jorge Santiago-Blay), *Twitter* (@blayjorge), and *Tumblr* (Life The Excitement of Biology), among others.
5. **Constantly Improving.** Authors, reviewers, subscribers, and members of the boards of *Life: The Excitement of Biology* continue suggesting improvements to the journal many of which have been incorporated. This editor insists that all scientific papers submitted to **LEB** be peer-reviewed while colleagues doing the reviews are encouraged to be careful, constructive, and as fast as possible. It is essential the authors take to heart the suggestions of reviewers and do not ignore alternative scientific explanations for the events they are trying to address.

All of these continue to help **LEB** gain visibility among the communities of scholars and the broader public. The support of Wolf Printing of York, Pennsylvania (USA), printers of the hard copy version of *Life: The Excitement of Biology* as well as *WordPress*, carrier of the digital version of **LEB** and their friendly and helpful online staff members deserve a special recognition.

Please, feel free to spread the word about *Life: The Excitement of Biology* and its high quality, fast publication, and editorial helpfulness. I hope all of you join me in a wonderful voyage of discovery during 2022 and years to come.

Sincerely and gratefully,

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P.S. A few images I captured of the 2020 presidential elections in the United States are herein reproduced as a memory of what we went through and its aftermath. All images were taken by me around York County, Pennsylvania, USA. Although this author has no political affiliations, he cares for the welfare of humanity.



VOTE
SASQUATCH
HE IS BIG. HE IS REAL.
UNLIKE THOSE OTHER GUYS.

STOP
THE
STEAL

BIDEN
IS NOT MY
PRESIDENT

WE ♥ ALL
RACES 
RELIGIONS 
GENDERS 
LIVING BEINGS

*Be
Kind.*