

From the Editor

Is writing letters a lost art? How many nonboilerplate letters have you written within the last week? Fewer than you did 5 years ago, I'll bet, even though you probably enjoy receiving and reading letters. This disparity came home to me recently when, after her 1st week in college, our youngest daughter informed us that "Mail is awesome!"

I agree. Mail is awesome, and I am grateful to those who have taken the time to write. I am especially grateful to those who have written letters for publication in our letters-to-the-editor column. On occasion, a letter identifies an intriguing topic. In fact, that is how the focus of this issue of *CBE Views*—e-mail safety for confidential material—came about. Gary Smith wrote a letter to the editor on that topic at about the same time that I read Andrew Appel's article in the *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* describing an e-mail-based peer-review system. The juxtaposition was irresistible: a focus for *CBE Views* was defined, and Smith accepted the invitation to be the guest editor.

Letters—whether by mail, fax, or e-mail—also help us to evaluate *CBE Views*. They tell us which parts constituted a stimulus strong enough to prompt someone to write, and that's valuable information in itself. In addition, we all benefit from the comments in our letters-to-the-editor column.

But you who have read the last several issues of *CBE Views* know that the number of letters has been meager. This "freshman" journal editor, like her freshman college student, wants more "awesome" mail.

Many people are working hard to produce a useful and interesting publication. We need and want to know whether we are on target. We need your responses. The contributing editors—listed at the right—prepare material for every issue, meeting a relentless schedule with grace and equanimity. And just to give them a handicap, we moved this 1st issue of 1997 ahead 1 month so that we could publish the 1st issue of the year in January rather than February. My hat goes off to Associate Editor Grace Gurtowski and the contributing editors, who met this condensed schedule in fine style.

The preceding issue of *CBE Views* (19(6):166) contains information to help you reach the editors. Photocopy the box and tuck it into your CBE Directory for handy reference. Many articles and columns invite your response. Don't delay! Send us a letter marked "For Publication" or "Not for Publication" to give us your opinion and wisdom about issues raised in *CBE Views* and to let us know what you like, don't like, and would like to read in this, your publication. We'll be checking our mailbox, looking for letters from you.

Martha Tacker

CBE VIEWS

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