

Acknowledgements to Christiane Courant

In May 2009, Christiane Courant retired as managing editor of *Apidologie*. Although retirement had been expected, her departure brings to light the true extent of her contribution to the journal's development and survival over almost 40 years. In fact, Christiane Courant has been with the journal from the very beginning when it was launched by F. Ruttner and J. Louveaux in 1970. During her time with *Apidologie*, the editorial team changed, grew and became more international. Twenty-one editors have served the journal through its history, with varying periods of involvement. In this fluctuating field, Christiane Courant stands out as the single common denominator, having dedicated her efforts to the journal through this entire period, while it developed from a French-German bilingual journal interfacing between beekeeping practice and bee science to a fully fledged international scientific journal. It is unlikely that without her watchful eye on the journal's quality and her persistent detailed work, *Apidologie* would have become what it is today.

Working as a librarian at INRA at Bures-sur-Yvette, Mme Courant was soon entrusted by J. Louveaux with managing manuscripts arriving at the French office. This kind of work suited her and set the stage for the coming decades of her professional life. Besides handling manuscripts and corresponding with authors and referees, she made an essential contribution to the journal's growing quality by her attention to detail. Meticulously scrutinizing the articles for consistency and form before they were forwarded to the publisher, she became indispensable to the founder editors and later, after the journal language gradually shifted to English, all editors were happily disencumbered by knowing they could leave final details to her care. Essentially, each manuscript then passed through her hands.

Over time, it became apparent that the equalitarian team of editors needed to be more structured and the obvious solution was to promote Christiane, or better to say, additionally burden her with the tasks of a managing editor. This proved to be an excellent idea, and revealed the full extent of her unobtrusive organizing skills. As a learned librarian, Christiane closely observed the rapidly changing challenges of scientific publishing and gently and patiently pushed for cautious adaptation and change, just by persistently posing inescapable questions with her characteristic smile.

Editing a journal is not restricted to just dispatching manuscripts, rather it is the work of a team. The outcome and reward of the teamwork much depend on smooth cooperation. By thoughtful preparation of the agenda and details of annual editorial meetings, it never felt as if she was heading the team, rather she was guiding the editors along. She also never forgot to take care of the well-being of the Journal after the editorial meetings, through well-written reports and implementation of changes discussed. The difference could be felt when she could not attend one or the other of the yearly meetings.

Christiane Courant will be missing, and missed, in the editorial board from now on. Together with her departure, a number of long-standing editors also have retired after serving many years. Characteristically, Christiane had the foresight to ensure that the Journal, in its current excellent shape, will be in good hands after this shift by bringing in and training Mme A. Dufay as new managing editor in a partly renewed, partly experienced team. The departing, remaining and the newly joining editors all want to heartily thank C. Courant for nourishing and guiding *Apidologie* by almost a working life's efforts and keeping faith with the "Intense collaboration in a spirit of deep friendship" given as a motto by F. Ruttner during the early years of the journal. We wish her all the best for her retirement life as the active and rewarding period she has planned it to be.

The Editorial Board of Apidologie