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The views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the journal’s editors, advisory editors, or supporters. The Canadian Journal of Environmental Education publishes material that may represent divergent ideas, judgments, and opinions.

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All other photos ©Steve Romanin. These photos were taken at the Watkins Glen, New York Farm Sanctuary. Steve Romanin is a graduate student in the Masters of Arts in Critical Sociology program at Brock University. He is currently studying under the supervision of Critical Animal Studies’ forerunner Dr. John Sorenson. His research examines meat-eating and masculinity, focusing specifically on the performance of masculinity by vegetarian men. He is former co-host and producer of the University of Toronto’s animal rights radio show, Animal Voices.

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A farewell letter to readers
by Bob Jickling, founding editor of the Canadian Journal of Environmental Education

Dear friends,

I am writing now, as the time has come for me to step down from the editorship of the Canadian Journal of Environmental Education.

The Journal was born in 1996 as a response to the state of environmental education research at that time. Our mission was to broaden the scope of legitimate research in our field. And, I think we have done that with quality, creativity, and a good deal of panache. After founding CJEE, and continuing to serve as editor for the last 15 years, it is difficult to step down. However, now the time does feel right.

The Journal would never have survived its start up without Priscilla Clarkin; we were a strong team for 10 years. It was natural to write to her, with a little melancholy, as I prepared to draft this letter. She replied, “I can imagine how difficult stepping down will be. The journal has been so important for so long. It was fun, and lots of hard work, and probably still is fun, and lots of hard work, for those involved.” Exactly.

My greatest hope is that by standing aside now, the CJEE team can spread its wings, imagine a fresh future, and enjoy the fun, vision, teamwork, and, indeed, the hard work that Priscilla and I relished for so long—and, that I’ve since enjoyed with folks at Lakehead University.

One of the keys to the energy and enthusiasm that drove the Journal in the early days was its clear sense of purpose. There were very few other journals in our field and we had an important role to play in the development of environmental education. I think that a key to the successful future of CJEE will be to reinvigorate something like that original purpose and passion. I am convinced that this cannot be done while I’m still in the middle of things. A new team needs space and freedom.

However, I would like to share my thoughts about a few challenges before us. First, consider subscriptions. We have been blessed with an agreement with EECOM to provide all members with a copy of CJEE. However, membership fluctuates. During a number of good years leading up to the World Environmental Education Congress in 2009, membership increased to very healthy levels, giving us a bit of a cushion. This year they are down some. So, vigorously recruiting subscribers might be something to work on over the next few years. You, readers, could really help us with this.

Second, we do face a very real issue concerning the commodification of scholarly material. The rise of large publishing houses and increased emphasis on journals with “high impact factors” is upon us in at least two ways. While we don’t see much overt attention given to this issue in Canada, it has found a foothold in this country. A year ago, I reviewed a tenure file from a candidate at
a major Canadian university and was asked to comment on the impact factor of the journals cited. Already, scholars from other countries are discouraged from publishing in journals like ours; I’ve been hearing directly from them for a few years now. While it may take a little while yet for the effects of this trend to dissuade Canadian authors from publishing with us, the “chill” is already on with international scholars. And, the quality of our journal and its reputation has been tied, in part, to the breadth of our international contributions. This leads to the third point, and one of the things we do have going for us.

The Canadian Journal of Environmental Education does, I think, have a good reputation and one of its potential future strengths is its resistance to the commercialization of scholarship. We freely allow scholars to reprint their work elsewhere and, using the Open Journal System, we freely post papers for all to read. In doing these things, we have consciously given access to scholarship a priority over making profit. Now, it is up to a new team, but this is an issue that could be as important today as our original mandate to broaden the range of legitimate research in environmental education.

If you agree that our open publishing agenda is important, then I can offer a few things to consider right now. We can encourage our authors, advisory editors, students, and each other to cite work from CJEE as much as is reasonable within the frameworks of our writing projects. Ultimately, this legitimizes the Journal’s contributions. We can also do this for other independent journals such as Éducation relative à l’environnement: Regards - Recherches – Réflexions, the Southern African Journal of Environmental Education and others.

We can actively recruit and encourage senior scholars and full professors to publish work with us. Academic freedom should allow a little room for well-established and tenured researchers to join with us in the resistance to some of these distressing trends. I would love to see more articles in CJEE written by advisory editors, long-time readers, and others who feel a need to resist this commodifying trend. That would be the greatest gift of all to the Journal—and to me.

These are just a few parting thoughts about how CJEE might respond to its current situation, and I’m sure that there are lots more worthwhile ideas. I really look forward to watching what your collective imaginations and creativity can come up with. Please be in touch with CJEE’s ongoing team. I am confident that Connie Russell, Jan Oakley, Gail Kuhl, Blair Niblett, and Lisa Korteweg will infuse new purpose into the Journal; but, they will need your ongoing support.

The last thing that I would like to talk about is the wonderful team that I’ve worked with over the years. Everywhere there have been supportive people who have helped keep this thing going. At Yukon College I am especially indebted to Priscilla Clarkin, Melanie Heynen, and Elaine Austin. Also from the Yukon, Al and Margriet Aasman, and their team at Aasman Design, have helped us develop the best covers. Ann Jarnet, at Environment Canada, believed in the project from the outset. The Canadian Network for Environmental Education
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The team has also included folks that have edited special issues and book reviews. Christine Robertson edited reviews for the Journal’s first 10 years and now Gavan Watson and Traci Warkentin are doing a very fine job in this role. Guest editors have helped the Journal probe important corners of our field. They include: Julian Agyeman; Connie Russell and Paul Hart; Janet Dyment; Rishma Dunlop; Marcia McKenzie and David Greenwood; Jan Oakley in this issue; and Lisa Korteweg for the next. There has also been a magnificent team of advisory editors that I’ve journeyed with along the way. In particular, Paul Hart was an invaluable sounding board through the critical early years.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt thanks to you all—readers, authors, reviewers, editors, administrators, and production assistants—for your friendship, thoughtfulness, and loyalty over the years.

With much affection,
Bob