

## Editorial: Celebrating 50 years of publication <sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

*Micronesica* was founded by Ben Stone to fill a need for a regional peer-reviewed journal in the natural sciences. At the time it was limited to the sciences of anthropology, botany, and zoology, but has since expanded to include agriculture as well as the occasional geology or chemistry paper. The first issue was published in September 1964 and included a diversity of papers such as “Social effects of Typhoon Ophelia (1960) on Ulithi,” a monograph on a flowering plant family, “The Cyperaceae of Micronesia,” and a description of a new species of fish from Guam. These papers remain important today, and one of my pleasures in editing *Micronesica* for the past twenty-five years was in knowing that the journal makes a lasting contribution to science in the region. The list of new taxa alone ensures that these volumes will be cited far into the future.

The scope of the journal has shifted over the decades: at first there was a greater diversity of anthropological papers, but when *ISLA A Journal of Pacific Studies* was founded, *Micronesica* focused on the more biological anthropology papers such as physical anthropology, vernacular names of organisms, traditional fishing methods. Subsequently, *ISLA* died and *Micronesica* once again took on a broader scope, recently publishing a series of papers on Chamorro *latte* archaeology and architecture (vol. 42). *Micronesica* also has a long track record of publishing papers from conferences.

Although primarily a peer-reviewed scientific journal, *Micronesica* serves not only specialists in the respective fields but also a diverse audience including resource managers, teachers, agricultural extension agents, and naturalists. Some articles are very accessible to a wide audience and others are communications to other specialists or necessarily-detailed material that is important to have in the scientific record.

Another very satisfying feature of *Micronesica* is that it provides a place where visiting scientists can publish the results of their expeditions to Micronesia, and thus return the knowledge to the region from which it came, while at the same time having their work accessible globally through libraries and on-line searches. Articles have come from France, Israel, and Italy as well as from all around the Pacific nations. This goal was also helped by the fact that we did not limit page length or require page charges; these were significant factors in the days of print publication, and allowed us to include monographic works such as the Monnniots’ study of tunicates (vol. 29) and several parts of the *Insects of Micronesia*.

As the College of Guam (founded 1952) has grown into the University of Guam, and as its mission has become more regional in both the educational goals and the research of the scientists here, the need to publish regional studies has become even more evident than in 1964. We added agriculture in the early 1990's because university scientists doing applied studies with a regional focus needed a peer-reviewed journal to publish their work.

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<sup>1</sup> Citation: Lobban, C.S. 2014. Editorial: Celebrating 50 years of publication. *Micronesica* 2014-02, 2 pp.  
Published online 26 June 2014. [uogedu.siteprotect.net/up/micronesica/2014](http://uogedu.siteprotect.net/up/micronesica/2014).  
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While the 20th Century was breathing its last days, *Micronesica* went online with a web presence including full-text pdfs. Last year we made the commitment to an online-only, continuous publishing model, thanks in part to changes made in the publication requirements for new taxa in zoology and botany, and the existence of distributed archives that could guarantee the longevity of electronic publications. Eliminating print editions has greatly reduced costs and administrative time, and funding has long been an issue for the journal; but it has also meant giving up the exchange program that took our print copies to libraries in far-flung parts of the world and brought us some valuable journal subscriptions in return. Continuous publishing has greatly shortened the time from receipt of a manuscript to publication, and this is an advantage to authors.

Looking back over 25 years of editorship – half the life of the journal! – I feel very satisfied with having sustained the work that Stone started and that Lu Eldredge, Chuck Birkeland, Roy Tsuda and Bob Richmond continued before me. Thankfully, my Deans steadfastly supported my effort with release time, even when financial and sometimes clerical support from the university for the journal were hard to get. At the same time I feel a sense of relief to be able to pass the torch to new hands at last. There were times when I got far behind in processing manuscripts, but even then no one was willing to take over. I am glad that G. Curt Fiedler stepped up, and confident that he will be able to infuse new energy into the quintagenarian. *Micronesica* has a long and illustrious track record, and still has a vital role to fill in the Pacific Islands.

It is sobering to reflect that when I took on *Micronesica* in 1989, desktop computers were barely taking over from typewriters as a mechanism for writing papers, and illustrations were pen-and-ink, Letraset lettered, or photos printed in dark rooms and laboriously arranged into plates with cutters and tape. Now everything is digital and we are all our own secretaries and graphic artists. The World Wide Web (aka – the internet) also arrived – communication became lightning-fast. Meanwhile the study of biodiversity, to which *Micronesica* has contributed substantially in the Western Pacific, has come back into vogue, climate change has been recognized as a major aspect of anthropogenic change to terrestrial and marine environments and biodiversity, and invasive species have become a major threat especially to terrestrial biota. *Micronesica* is still relevant and important to the region, as scientists continue to document the changes taking place here.

Dankulo na Si Yu'us Ma'åse. Salamat po. Thank you.

Chris Lobban  
Editor 1989–2014

Received 22 May 2014, revised 03 June 2014.