E. Scott Geller (Editor, 1990–1992)

THINKING BIG

It was more than half a decade ago, yet I remember the day as if it were yesterday. I had just beaten Brian Iwata in two of three sets of tennis at the Tradewinds Resort Hotel in St. Petersburg, Florida (although Brian probably remembers that he won the match). While walking off the court with Brian, we were met by Jon Bailey. Brian surprised me with a shocking question that was to change my behaviors dramatically from August 1989 until August 1992. "How would you like to be the next editor of the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*?" My immediate reaction was "Are you kidding—why me?" Jon Bailey proceeded to explain why *JABA* was "ready" for me, and vice versa. Brian supported Jon's rationale, and added that being selected editor of the premier research journal in applied psychology was the greatest honor that could be bestowed on anyone in our profession. How could I refuse?

As outlined in my first *JABA* editorial, my graduate training was more extensive in cognitive psychology than behavioral science, and my teaching and research career began with the development of a laboratory and programmatic research in information processing and decision making. My field studies in applied behavior analysis (to increase recycling and decrease littering) began as tangential exploratory research. Over the years, my research in behavioral psychology was shaped most substantially through feedback from *JABA* associate editors and reviewers. I had reviewed numerous manuscripts submitted to *JABA*, and during Brian Iwata's term as editor, I served as an associate editor. But, assuming the role of editor seemed much more complex, challenging, time consuming, and critically important than these other responsibilities. I did not feel prepared for this opportunity, and believed there were others more prepared than I.

Jon and Brian based their case on the need to bring the diversity and dissemination of *JABA* to

new heights. Thanks to their efforts at the *JABA* helm, the editorial procedures were streamlined and computerized, the types of publications increased (including Brief Reports, Replications, Innovations, Book Reviews, and Commentaries), and the dissemination of *JABA* was enhanced remarkably with the publication of four volumes in the *JABA* Reprint Series (i.e., *Behavior Analysis in Developmental Disabilities*, *Behavior Analysis in the Community*, *Behavior Analysis in Education*, and *Methodological and Conceptual Issues in Applied Behavior Analysis*). Now was the time to bring broader attention to the pages of *JABA*, and because I had been preaching "make-a-difference" behavioral science to professionals in government, industry, and grassroots agencies for over a decade, Jon and Brian figured I could bring a large-scale dissemination perspective to *JABA*. This defined a primary personal mission, and many innovations introduced during my editorial term reflected this mission to increase and diversify *JABA* readership.

The principles and technology of applied behavior analysis can contribute substantially to solving all major societal problems (including poor-quality education and industrial output, environmental pollution and resource depletion, and intentional and unintentional injuries and fatalities). Readers of *JABA* know this. Thus, it seemed to me this belief could be broadened and result in dramatic increases in make-a-difference applications of behavior analysis, if *JABA* readership were increased *and* if some pages of *JABA* would illustrate convincingly the broad-based applicability of behavior-change technology.

During my editorship, the number of pages published in *JABA* increased substantially, reaching a record high in 1991 with 804 pages (Volume 24) and beating that record in 1992 (Volume 25) by 114 pages. Because individual and student subscription rates increased by only 4 dollars during

my term, readers received more for their money, including seven special sections on important societal topics. The special sections added broad-based content to each issue and made *JABA* more relevant for classroom use. Given all this, along with costly promotional efforts (discussed below), my mission to extend *JABA* readership fell short. In fact, *JABA* subscriptions in 1992 (at 4,636) for the volume with three special sections and the greatest number of pages (918) were at their lowest point since 1989, continuing a 3-year decline. Furthermore, the greatest decline occurred for student subscriptions. Thus, from a business perspective, my editorial decisions were least profitable. Why didn't the provision of more scholarship and topical sections, with concomitant editorials and insightful discussion and commentary from leaders in the field, increase subscriptions, especially from students?

The special topic areas addressed road safety, social validity, theory versus technology, behavioral community intervention, the educational crisis, social competence, and performance management in business and athletics. Three of these special sections were reprinted as monographs; they would be valuable tools for psychology classes at both graduate and undergraduate levels. Monograph 5 on "Social Validity: Multiple Perspectives" provides informative and constructive discussion on concepts and methodology that should be understood by all students of applied psychology, whatever their intervention approach or target. No other source provides as much depth and breadth of discussion on this important topic, while also suggesting thoughtful and practical research methods and intervention procedures for addressing social validity issues.

Monograph 6 on "Science, Theory, and Technology: Varied Perspectives" addresses one of the most provocative and troubling controversies in our discipline, one that is responsible for misunderstanding, communication barriers, and fractionation within our field (e.g., experimental vs. applied behavior analysis) and across disciplines (e.g., behavioral vs. cognitive science). The 10 discussion papers in this monograph evolved from written reactions to a letter I sent to 33 renowned re-

searchers and scholars in behavior analysis (experimental and applied). In this letter, I questioned whether applied behavior analysis is technological to a fault. This monograph not only reviews key aspects of the theory versus technology controversy in developing and applying a science of behavior, but also raises a number of new issues and perspectives to ponder as applied behavior analysis approaches the 21st century. My editorial for this monograph reviewed the 22 written replies I received from 33 inquiries. The 67% return of comprehensive discussion on this topic suggests that leaders in our field consider the theory/technology controversy worthy of attention and dissemination. The collection of perspectives in this monograph (and *JABA* Volume 24, No. 3) is clearly on the leading edge and is relevant for a number of graduate and undergraduate courses.

The third monograph (from *JABA* Volume 25, Numbers 1 and 2, "The Education Crisis: Issues, Perspectives, Solutions") was probably the most important series of papers published during my term, from a contemporary application viewpoint. The discussion and commentary from leading education researchers and scholars in our field define the current crisis in U.S. education in various ways (e.g., from insufficient tools and implementation processes to a paucity of contingencies to motivate the dissemination and use of the effective education-improvement tools available today). These papers also offer a diversity of strategies for improving the quality of education (e.g., from the elementary school experiences of disadvantaged, average, and gifted children to the professional education of future teachers; and from approaches to increase the learning gains of one individual to modifying an entire school system and the community at large). I challenge you to show me a more important educational document in the current professional literature.

I was so convinced of the critical importance and seminal nature of this monograph that I wrote to *JABA* associate editors and board members to solicit the names and addresses of researchers, politicians, media specialists, scholars, and practitioners

interested in educational issues. This procedure gave us more than 800 names and addresses (not counting individuals already subscribing to *JABA*). These persons were sent a complimentary copy of the monograph along with a cover letter encouraging recipients to (a) disseminate the valuable lessons accomplished from the applications of behavior analysis to education, and (b) subscribe to *JABA* in order to keep up to date with issues and research findings relevant to the advancement of education. A *JABA* subscription form was included in this mailing.

A year earlier, Mary Louise Wright and I accomplished an analogous promotional strategy with the first *JABA* issue of the year (Volume 24, No. 1). The special section of this issue (an editorial, seven research articles, and six commentaries) targeted road safety, and more than 700 copies of this issue were mailed internationally to leaders in the transportation field, including media specialists and relevant magazine, journal, and newspaper editors. These promotional efforts were expensive and time consuming, and I'm certainly grateful for the advice, encouragement, and support from Mary Lou throughout these ventures.

Besides distributing complementary copies of *JABA* to key individuals, we implemented a number of other interventions in an attempt to increase *JABA* submissions, subscriptions, and readership. Listed below are those strategies I believe are worth considering for future application, even though I have no evidence that they had any impact.

1. All of my associate editors and staff assistants received special gray and red "business cards" with the *JABA* logo. (During my tenure, I gave out 3,000 of my own *JABA* cards.)

2. We developed and disseminated five different promotional flyers with *JABA* subscription forms (see the Summer 1990 issue of *JABA*, pp. 145–147), each flyer highlighting the special relevance of *JABA* for a certain domain or audience (i.e., industry and business settings, education, community intervention, university students, and developmental disabilities). (I'm still convinced this market segmentation approach could be quite ef-

fective if individuals would distribute appropriate flyers at conferences and workshops and mail documents to nonsubscribers of *JABA*. However, only Jon Bailey, Brandon Greene, and Denny Reid requested copies of a promotional subscription flyer. In 1990, a total of 133 subscriptions were completed on these forms. Most notable were several on the business and industry form, including corporate subscriptions from Ford Motor Company, Nissan, Proctor & Gamble, Exxon Chemical, Domino's Pizza, Air Products and Chemicals, Inc., Logan Aluminum, and Watch Tower Publications.)

3. Beginning with the Winter 1990 issue of *JABA*, we added a media relations director (Bruce A. Thyer) to the editorial staff in an attempt to obtain media visibility for *JABA* articles. Bruce developed a list of over 60 mass media outlets and contact persons and mailed them press-release summaries of those articles deemed to have the most public appeal. He also sent these media contacts the first page of all *JABA* research articles, with an offer to provide more information upon request. (Although his annual reports reflected a number of success stories from his exemplary performance, Bruce was not satisfied with his effort-to-outcome ratio. Thus, we eliminated the media relations position in 1992.)

4. Beginning with the first *JABA* issue of 1992, regular members of the editorial board of the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* (*JEAB*) were selected to serve on the *JABA* editorial board, and vice versa. This process has worked quite well to promote the relevance of theory and technology in both basic and applied research, and is continuing under the current editorship of Nancy Neef.

One factor to consider is the possibility that scholars and professionals are actually reading less. Thus, despite the fact that we publish more articles or special issues, the actual number of pages read may be on the decline. As Phil Hinline recently put it, "I have a gotta-read pile and a wanna-read pile, and because of increasing professional demands both of these piles get increasingly high. And, I just can't find time for my wanna-read pile."

Even more discouraging to me is the lack of accurate dissemination of basic behavior-change principles. Over the past 6 months, for example, I have listened to the following audiotapes, representing only a small sample of "pop psychology" tapes, and none of these presentations discussed even the basics of behavior analysis (e.g., the important role of consequences in controlling behavior): "Coping with Difficult People" by R. M. Branson, "How to Build High Self-Esteem" by J. Canfield, "Principle Centered Leadership" by S. R. Covey, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" by S. R. Covey, "Increasing Human Effectiveness" by R. Moawad, "Lead the Field" by E. Nightingale, "Unlimited Power" by A. Robbins, "Investment in Excellence" by L. E. Tice, "Transforming Stress into Power" by M. Tager and S. Willard, "The Psychology of Achievement" by B. Tracey, "The Psychology of Winning" by D. Waitley, "Self-Esteem" by J. White, "Goal Setting" by Z. Ziglar, and "Personal Excellence" by K. Blanchard. These audiotapes and related self-help books are reaching millions of people daily, with concepts and self-help strategies that sound good but have not been demonstrated empirically to be effective. Actually, I was surprised to find so much similarity between the contents of the audiotapes. Many of the same anecdotes and quotes from famous people are repeated across audiotapes. Strategies suggested for developing self-esteem and building personal success (the key focus of most "pop psychology" presentations) were quite similar, with goal setting, positive mental attitude, and self-affirmations (e.g., repeating "I am the greatest" to oneself) leading the list of achievement strategies.

I expected Ken Blanchard, coauthor of the infamous "One-Minute Manager," to discuss the role of applied behavior analysis in achieving personal success and improving quality of life. However, Blanchard gives only minimal attention to the basic contingency that made his best seller so appealing and useful (i.e., one-minute praising); instead, he focuses his discussion on the application of antecedent, cognitive strategies to achieve personal excellence. Indeed, he is proud to admit the profound

influence of Anthony Robbins on his current perspectives for personal achievement.

With a high school diploma, substantial charisma, and a tremendous investment in marketing, Anthony Robbins has become a multimillionaire with his selling of psychology to the masses. He claims to have developed his approach to peak personal achievement (once called "neurolinguistic programming" and now referred to as "neuroassociative learning") after reading more than 700 books. With no skills to conduct psychological research or interpret research data, Robbins could use only personal intuition or common sense when deciding what to include or reject from his "Unlimited Power." He kept what sounded good.

Clearly, the ability to read and interpret research methodology and results is the critical factor separating our students from "pop psychologists" like Anthony Robbins. However, this distinction will become blurred if we don't continually establish contingencies for our students to read the premier research journals in experimental and applied psychology (including *JEAB* and *JABA*, of course). Establishing such contingencies for our students will increase our own "gotta-read" piles, an obvious constructive side effect of motivating our students to read the research literature. Another self-motivator for increased reading of the research literature would be to listen to one or more of the "pop psychology" tapes listed above or to add one of the concomitant self-help paperbacks to your "gotta read" pile. I recommend Stephen Covey's best seller (*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989). There is nothing new here for the behavior analyst, except lessons on how to teach (or sell) our principles without using any of our jargon.

You might be wondering why I have listened to these tapes. A beneficial side effect was personal commitment to keep reading *JABA*, but I really purchased these tapes (a rather expensive investment at \$60 or more per set) to improve my ability to disseminate the principles and research findings of our field. The public buys these tapes and becomes enthralled by the seminar teachings of the

authors because the information is presented well. It sounds good, and thus is accepted without empirical evidence of efficacy. When we learn how to make our effective principles and technology sound good, we will begin to make bigger large-scale differences in quality of life.

By continuing to read the research literature of our field, we will always have the edge on knowing

what works best to make a difference. However, the challenge of effective dissemination must be addressed if we want to translate thinking big into acting big.

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Mary Louise Wright (Business Manager, 1968–)

HOW TIME FLIES!

Way back in 1967, when *JABA* was so new that it did not yet have a name, there was much excitement in Lawrence, Kansas. Mont Wolf's election as the new journal's first editor made everyone at KU terribly proud, especially those close to the newly reorganized Department of Human Development and Family Life.

Margaret Risley was hired by Mont to help him put efficient editorial procedures in place. She also searched for someone who could design the cover, and eventually found a printer in Kansas City who was willing to comply with her request to be shown at least 24 different color combinations for her tentative cover design.

Mont also needed a business manager. When he asked me if I would be interested in the job, he reported that his wife had made the suggestion because "Mary Lou is organized." Probably true. Sandra Wolf and I ran the Lawrence branch of the Kansas City Planned Parenthood. My second child had just been born, and Mont's description of the job seemed ideal: earn some money and still be at home with the children.

JABA started out on a desk in my study. Mont had said the founding powers hoped the journal, whose first issue was to appear during the Spring

of 1968, would have 1,500 subscribers by the end of that year. But subscriptions poured in so rapidly that we had reached almost 4,300 by then, so I moved *JABA* to the "weaving room" upstairs. I soon sold the loom, concluding correctly that I'd never again find time for such big projects. By the end of Mont's 3-year term, we had almost 5,500 subscribers.

The creation of *JABA* was relatively easy, for it was started by the Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior (SEAB), which was already publishing the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* (*JEAB*). Ten years earlier, the founders of *JEAB* (and SEAB) had scrounged to find enough money to start the journal. Now there was enough money in the bank to afford sending out 19,000 brochures to prospective *JABA* subscribers and to give away sample copies galore. At the Eastern Psychological Association meeting in Washington, we gave away about 1,000 copies of the first issue, with the aid of the friendly equipment manufacturers, who were constant advertisers in *JEAB* and had also taken space in *JABA*. They allowed us to display stacks of the first issue in their exhibition hall booths.

Most important to me was the expertise and