FlyBook: A Preface

Gerald M. Rubin¹

Janelia Research Campus, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Ashburn, Virginia

A tradition of open communication and sharing has served *Drosophila* researchers well for over 100 years. As Thomas Hunt Morgan wrote in 1917:

We make a point of supplying any individual or group of individuals with any material in stock, not only material that has been studied by ourselves but also material as yet unpublished if it can be utilized. The method of locking up your stuff until you have published about it, or of keeping secret your ideas and progress has never appealed to me personally, and I think as a simple matter of policy that such a procedure is as injurious to the student as it is to the progress of science, which we profess to have most at heart (Kohler 1994, p. 134).

Indeed, this ethos is one important reason why it is even possible to talk about a “community” of fly workers. Another is that our fortunes rise and fall together, based not on which of us publishes some result first, but on how the value of fly research *as a whole* is viewed by others.

FlyBook continues a long tradition of publications dedicated to sharing knowledge of *Drosophila* that originated in 1934 with the *Drosophila Information Service*, an informal trade journal conceived and edited by Calvin Bridges and Milislav Demerec. This early emphasis on wide dissemination of information, detailed methods, and reagents—beyond what normally appears in formal publications—not only advanced the field and welcomed new investigators, but also was instrumental in establishing an ethical system that insisted that individuals live up to community standards if they wanted to benefit from them. The practice of collecting, organizing, and sharing information has continued to be an empowering force in the fly community as illustrated by Lindsley and Grell’s (1968) “red book,” Michael Ashburner’s many books (see, for example, Ashburner 1989; Ashburner *et al.* 2005), and FlyBase (2015). A common feature of these

prior efforts is that they were produced by intellectual leaders in the field, a tradition I am pleased to see continued by FlyBook. Authoritative compendiums, providing critical reviews on many topics in some depth, decrease the barrier of entry into a new research area and reduce confusion by providing a mechanism to clarify the many misunderstandings and oversights that accumulate in any large body of scientific literature.

Drosophila research still has much to contribute as it enters its second century. All of us who work with *Drosophila* have a strong self-interest in preserving the practices established by Morgan, Bridges, and their coworkers. They make the fly community more effective and increase its chances of survival. FlyBook represents one mechanism for doing just that, and this endeavor deserves our enthusiastic support.

Acknowledgments

I thank Allan Spradling and Hugo Bellen for helpful suggestions and comments on an earlier draft of this preface.

Literature Cited

- Ashburner, M., 1989 *Drosophila: A Laboratory Handbook*. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, Cold Spring Harbor, NY.
- Ashburner, M., K. G. Golic, and R. S. Hawley, 2005 *Drosophila: A Laboratory Handbook*. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, Cold Spring Harbor, NY.
- FlyBase, 2015 FlyBase: introduction of the *Drosophila melanogaster* Release 6 reference genome assembly and large-scale migration of genome annotations. *Nucleic Acids Res.* DOI: 10.1093/nar/gku1099. Available at: www.flybase.org.
- Kohler, R. E., 1994 Excerpt of a letter dated July 25, 2017 from T. H. Morgan to R. S. Woodward of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, who funded his work, p. 134 in *Lords of the Fly*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Lindsley, D. L., and E. H. Grell, 1968 *Genetic Variations of Drosophila melanogaster* (publication no. 627). Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, DC.