Editors' Note

It can be challenging to line up the right peer reviewers for a manuscript. Reviewers benefit by getting an early sense of the work that is out, but that is a diffuse benefit. The most reliable reviewers are often those with multiple requests and reviewing while doing all the other work our jobs require is often a challenge. Peer review journals like *Law and Society Review* depend on the generosity of a large and varied community of potential reviewers. Editorial frustration can build around the occasional manuscript that requires two-dozen requests to get three reviews. But, the review process always improves a manuscript, sometimes considerably. The reviewers and editors put time and thought into the comments authors receive; it is a form of community service we do for, and that we rely on from, our colleagues.

Increasingly, the institution of peer reviewing has come under examination. As gatekeeper to elite academic journals, peer review marks out articles that end up as "heftier" entries in a resume. Peer review can also function to constrain the canon: novel arguments and emergent scholarship can be tougher to get through the peer review process. The double-blind process has protections against a few types of bias, but not all. Our challenge as editors is to extend both the reach and the variety of law and society scholarship while maintaining disciplinary rigor and coherence.

A *Times Higher Education* article (Matthews, 2016) argues that the peer review system "is coming apart at the seams." According to the article, increasing numbers of papers submitted and of journal types add new strains to the system. Should peer review practices change? Should existing journals, say, move to paying referees for their work? If this ends of up happening, will we see the evolution of different communities of publishing—some journals that pay for review and others that continue to rely on volunteer academic labor? These questions are not surprising. With open access and online paper repositories, academic publishing is changing and the demands of peer review are correspondingly shifting.

Law & Society Review, Volume 52, Number 1 (2018)
© 2018 Law and Society Association. All rights reserved.

https://doi.org/10.1111/lasr.12323 Published online by Cambridge University Press

At the *Law and Society Review* we are proud of our peer review process and are grateful to our colleagues for their generosity as peer reviewers. Many law and society scholars from a variety of disciplines contribute thoughtful and smart peer reviews. When they can't do the review themselves, a number suggest other scholars to contact. This is much appreciated. The *Law and Society Review* is successful because of our authors, of course, but also because of the quality and extent of peer reviews contributed by our academic community.

So, at the mid-point of our co-editorship, we thank all of you who review—time after time and so well—the manuscripts submitted to us. Sometimes an author whose manuscript we have rejected nonetheless emails gratitude for the extent and high quality of commentary received. The credit for this goes to you, the reviewers.

This issue has an interesting mix of articles—all helped along by peer review and the engagement of the authors with those reviews. Enjoy.

Jeannine Bell, Susan Sterett, and Margot Young

David Matthews, "Should academics be paid for peer review?," Times Higher Education, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/should-academics-be-paid-for-peer-review#survey-answer

https://doi.org/10.1111/lasr.12323 Published online by Cambridge University Press