



NEAL A. MAXWELL INSTITUTE
FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

Title The Editor's Notebook and A New Editorial Team

Author(s) John L. Sorenson

Reference *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10/2 (2001): 3-5.

ISSN 1065-9366 (print), 2168-3158 (online)

Abstract Introduction to the current issue and the new editorial team.

THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

When I offered in 1998 to take up editorship of the *Journal*, it was with two provisos. First, that a very different approach be taken to the format and contents of the valuable but underused and underappreciated journal as it had been built up by Stephen Ricks and associates. And second, that I would serve for a limited number of years—and only if I could have the help of two proven friends and scholars, Kent Brown and Jerry Bradford, to hold up my hands when I tired.

Now the time has come to turn the responsibility over to new people. All of us at FARMS feel fortunate that Kent Brown has agreed to don the mantle of editor. He has chosen a new set of associate editors who promise to assist him as Kent himself has aided me. On the next two pages he introduces his new helpers.

We feel we have made a good start on our objectives, although, of course, we have not accomplished all that we hoped for. We especially wanted to publish articles that would continue to give readers real substance about current scholarly research concerning the Book of Mormon. At the same time, we wished to make the material understandable for those who do not think of themselves as researchers. In order to issue the *Journal* semiannually, we also felt we needed to involve more scholarly writers than in the past. We were able to report in 2000 that some 30 authors had been published in our first four issues in the new format. Now that number has grown to 38. Many topics have been addressed that span a wide range of useful approaches to the embryonic field of Book of Mormon studies. Meanwhile, comments received from readers tell us that some have benefited a great deal from the labors of willing authors and editors to see that the writing, even on technical matters, is lucid and interesting.

But we are still not satisfied with the scope of the topics addressed so far. We have sought writers to prepare articles on a large number of additional subjects. The new editors will undoubtedly encourage further writing that has not yet germinated from the seeds we have planted. Yet some of the material already appearing in the *Journal* has been of great significance for the study of the Book of Mormon and might not have been made public had we not pressed forward.

Special thanks go to our designer, Bjorn Pendleton. He has made silk purses from the sows' ears we have sometimes given him. Without his inspired creativity, our hopes of appealing to lay readers would have been frustrated. Michael Lyon has also been valuable in helping identify appropriate visual materials.

We thank the members of the Editorial Advisory Board as well as our technical supervisors, especially Mel Thorne, Alison Coutts, and Don Brugger, and their staff for their efforts to make up for our deficiencies. The FARMS officers and board have supported us at every point, and we thank them.

Looking back over our combined effort, we take considerable satisfaction in the fact that such a minuscule staff and limited budget have been able to do so much. While we have fallen behind our optimal publication schedule (not particularly due to our failures), the lessons we have learned may aid the incoming editors in doing better in the future.

Has it been worth doing? Yes indeed. The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ is of such great importance to humanity that all of us with capabilities to more fully elucidate it, teach it, and live its teachings do a good thing by holding up its light to a world still largely ignorant of its power.
—John L. Sorenson, Editor

Submitting Articles to the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*

Guidelines for preparing and submitting articles for publication in the *Journal* are available on the FARMS Web site (farms.byu.edu), by e-mail request to jbms@byu.edu, or by mail from FARMS. In general, authors should submit a detailed outline or abstract to the editors for approval before submitting a completed manuscript.

A NEW EDITORIAL TEAM

Times of transition are both cheery and sad. But to see John L. Sorenson step aside as editor of the *Journal* brings a feeling of loss. It was tough enough when Stephen D. Ricks, the founding editor, finally turned his attention to other demands. With the retirement of John (if one can really speak of his retiring), the new group of editors collectively sense a yawning chasm between ourselves and the terrain on which he always stood so surefootedly and on which he always demanded that authors stand. One of our deepest hopes is that John will permit us in the future to feature him and his work in the pages of the *Journal*.

In this transition we also lose the reasoning voice of a friend and colleague in M. Gerald Bradford, who has served as an associate editor during the past four-plus years. Jerry has always stood for taking another look at an item or rethinking an issue. It is one of our fond hopes that he will bring the written results of his considerable skills and defined interests to these pages.

Gratefully, I am not alone. Four outstanding individuals have graciously consented to assist in the responsibilities associated with producing a quality journal that seeks to bring readers to a clearer understanding of the Book of Mormon. All four are members of the BYU faculty, and all four were students at BYU at one point or another. Each of these new associate editors brings a set of skills that, after working with John and Jerry, I thought essential for continuing their work at any competent level. Let me introduce the new associate editors in alphabetical order of last names.

Richard E. Bennett is the Canadian in the group. He joined the faculty of Church History and Doctrine in 1997 after distinguishing himself as the head archivist at the University of Manitoba, a position that he held for almost 20 years. Before that assignment,

for three years he worked 2,000 feet underground for the International Nickel Company (INCO) in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada. One can understand Richard's importance to the *Journal* as a church historian when one looks back at the articles appearing therein during the past four years. It becomes quickly apparent that, in the minds of the editors, Book of Mormon studies embrace the story of the Book of Mormon in the modern era. Richard's abiding interest in the Book of Mormon becomes visible in his rather recent study titled "The Book of Mosiah: A Primer for the Restoration," which appeared in the volume of essays from the 28th annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium.

Donald W. Forsyth completed his graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania in 1979 and joined BYU's Department of Anthropology that same year as John Sorenson's first hire during his term as chair. His skills in the archaeological study of ancient America place him in a key position to assist with the *Journal*, for his archaeological interests center on the Mesoamerican region, particularly the Maya area. He revealed how serious he is about archaeology when he took his diving skills to Guatemala and helped recover artifacts from the bottom of a lake. He also carries an abiding interest in the origin of complex societies in that region and has focused his energies on the analysis of pottery, the one solid basis for determining the dates of various archaic civilizations. In addition, he maintains a research interest in the ethnohistory of the native Americans of Brazil in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Cynthia L. Hallen is an associate professor of linguistics who joined the BYU faculty in 1991 after completing her graduate work at the University of Arizona. Her background reveals a long acquaintance with Emily Dickinson and her works. She also possesses a superb grasp of the meanings and nuances



The new board of editors for the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, from left to right: Cynthia L. Hallen, Dana M. Pike, S. Kent Brown, Donald W. Forsyth, and Richard E. Bennett.

of English words. As witness, she is the contributing author of the department in this journal titled “What’s in a Word?” She first heard about Joseph Smith when she was a fifth-grader living on the island of Okinawa. She joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at the end of her high school years after ditching chemistry class and happening into an LDS church building to pray, whereupon she met the custodian and the first counselor in the local bishopric. It is her fondness for the Book of Mormon, her literary skills, and her willingness to pay close attention to good writing that made her an attractive candidate to serve as an associate editor for the *Journal*.

Dana M. Pike grew up in New England and dreamed of settling there, but in 1992 BYU hired him in the Department of Ancient Scripture. Like Don Forsyth, he completed graduate work at the Univer-

sity of Pennsylvania before joining the BYU faculty. During his graduate school days, he worked at the blood bank and in the hematology department of the oldest hospital in the United States, the Pennsylvania Hospital, which was founded by Benjamin Franklin. Along the way, Dana taught for a year at the University of North Carolina as a visiting faculty member. His specialty is Israelite history and religion, with a focus on the period of the Israelite monarchies, before the people of Judah were exiled in Babylonia. That interest by itself positions Dana to serve the *Journal*, for it was at the end of that historical period that Lehi and Sariah left Jerusalem, taking with them the lore, culture, and religion of their people into the New World.

In my view, we shall all benefit from the combined wisdom that these associate editors will bring to the *Journal’s* tasks. ■