Welcome to this special issue of the *Journal of Magazine and New Media Research*, which is devoted to magazine cover research. Guest editor Sammye Johnson is responsible for gathering and shaping the material for this issue, which includes the largest number of articles about magazine cover research ever published in a single journal.

*The Journal of Magazine and New Media Research* leads off with an essay by Johnson that offers insight into the challenges and rewards of magazine cover research; she closes the *Journal* with an annotated bibliography of books focusing on magazine covers. In-between, you’ll find four articles that will be useful in and out of the classroom.

David E. Sumner’s “Sixty-Four Years of *Life* Magazine: What Did Its 2,128 Covers Cover?” is noteworthy because it builds upon previous research from the academy and the industry about magazine covers, and advances it. In discussing whether *Life*’s cover functioned as a “cultural artifact” or as a “marketing tool,” Sumner reports that only 34 covers featured African-Americans and that “movies and entertainers” was the most frequent cover theme.

“Traditional Narratives Resurrected: The Gulf War on *Life* Magazine Covers,” by Donnalyn Pompper and Brian J. Feeney, takes a different approach. The authors focus on the meaning and dominant ideology of five Gulf War covers, looking for patterns, themes, and anomalies in narrative content.

Patricia Prijatel’s “A New Culture of Covers: Slovenian Magazines in Transition” is the result of having spent a sabbatical year in Ljubljana, Slovenia. She provides the latest research on how magazine covers are constructed in Slovenia, with emphasis on the cultural influences that come into play.

Finally, Gerald Grow provides an illustrated teaching essay about the history of magazine covers and cover lines, with numerous examples to study and four sidebars. Grow’s essay is rich in opportunities for classroom discussion and further research.

I hope you’ll find this special issue a valuable resource as a researcher and as a teacher. Please join me in thanking Sammye Johnson, for her work in making this issue
happen, and David E. Sumner, Donnalyn Pompper, Brian Feeney, Patricia Prijatel, and Gerald Grow, for making a significant contribution to understanding magazine covers and how to study them.