

Hail and Farewell

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As this is the end of my term as Editor-in-Chief, I thought I would spend a little time thanking the people who got me to the position. Since I truly believe that you cannot know where you are going without knowing where you have been, this will include some longtime lore.

I want to start by thanking the people who taught me that professionalism does not start and stop with test tubes and slides. Sister Aloysia, my Education Coordinator, brought me to a Massachusetts Senate hearing on a bill to grant licensure to our profession. It didn't pass and I realized that there were people in the world who did not respect what I did. I couldn't understand why. Another person of influence was Roma Brown who became President of then ASMT, and obeyed a subpoena from Congress. She was rewarded by being fired from her Kansas laboratory. She and several other presidents and leaders engaged in a multi-year set of lawsuits about the independence of the profession. Each suit was settled in ASMT's favor and the rulings were based upon the 13th, 14th, and 16th Amendments (the anti-slavery amendments) to the US Constitution. These actions reinforced my belief that, in addition to knowledge and skill, action is a necessary criterion for a professional.

Jean Shafer of New York was a world-class hematologist in the clinical laboratory. She taught both medical laboratory science students and residents. She convinced me that our field did indeed encompass patient care and treatment. Perhaps we do not have a direct hands-on aspect to the activities but without us, medicine as we know it in the 21st century would not exist. When the first textbooks written by medical laboratory scientists were published, they proved that we knew enough about our own field to teach others. It sounds silly now but wasn't then.

One editor of the then Journal of Medical Technology, Ina Lee Roe, once said that a profession is characterized by the quality and quantity of learning disseminated

through its journals. Did you know that at one time, in addition to the JMT, almost every state society had a scientific journal with peer reviewed articles? While the constituent society and national meetings were then and are still now a major source for updating and distributing knowledge, reliable new knowledge is found in scientific and professional journals. My first manuscript was published within five years of graduation. It wasn't the world's most sensational information but the process taught me that peer validation of one's work is important to the development of professionalism. Throughout the years, journal contributions have characterized our profession to the world. Indeed, one could argue that the journal is the main (perhaps only) way to communicate – as peers – to other disciplines.

Karen Karni of Minnesota brought the synthesis of education and science to the journal through a lifetime of writing. She is now retired but her university has a complete set of every journal issue we have ever published, all the way back to 1935. David McGlasson from Texas proved that we can do world-class work. Brian Healy from UMass Dartmouth took a senior year experience and turned into one of the ten most frequently cited articles in the field of obstetrics.

Working with various editors has been a positive and enhancing experience. Carol McCoy really really wanted people to know how to write abstracts well. Marian and Ivan Schwaubauer took a journal severely wounded from poor editorial office activities and brought it back to life. Ivan, like other spouses found in this profession, stepped up to the plate and gave his heart to it and to writing.

More recent editors have embraced the ever-widening range of appropriate journal manuscripts. From ethics and governmental relations to ever expanding influence of molecular diagnosis and evidence-based medicine, the journal has had relied on writers such as James Griffith, Lynn Williams, and Elizabeth Liebach. Editors such as the late Bunny Rodak, through her introduction of a new role for the Consulting Editors, and current editors,

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Perry Scanlan and Kristin Landis-Piwowar, have encouraged and mentored many a new author.

New criteria for listing in PubMed and the move to an electronic journal have made change mandatory. But, when all is settled down, the new guidelines for authors will include the use of modern story telling such as motion capture video or color enhanced photographs. The loss of the mandatory 64-page limit makes longer articles possible and should encourage the submission of more reviews that incorporate both the traditional and newer tests/therapy now available. It will allow for us to tell the journal's story both as a stand-alone webpage and as a direct tie in to ASCLS. It will also provide our

manuscripts to a broader audience of readers.

In the twenty years in which I have been an editor, I have witnessed recovery from near destruction, PubMed Index listing that will soon turn into full print capacity, growth of both the quality and quantity of submitted articles and the electronic turn into the 21st century. That is quite of bit of experience and will be one that I hold dear.

And as Sylvia Plath once said, "Everything in life is writable about if you have the outgoing guts and the imagination to do it.. The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt." Thank you for the experience and get on with your writing.