Dogs Don’t Bark at Parked Cars

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Well, our term is up and it is time to move on. The owners have selected a new bench and we slowly fade into that good night. As I reflect on my 6 years as editor-in-chief, there are many highpoints in reporting new discoveries, but none compares with sharing the complexity of publishing with dedicated people; there is something inspiring about having worked with such a fabulous group of associate editors at JASN. Deeply in touch with every corner of nephrology, they taught all of us much about modern science.

Vivian Siegel, our executive editor, kept us on even keel, deftly navigating the art of best practices in editorship, style, and brinkmanship, particularly elevating the care one must show authors and reviewers. The magnificent tastes of Ray Harris and Sue Quaggin, our sequential deputy editors, guided me in sifting through nearly 7000 original submissions to find very best manuscripts for further review and publication. Our associate editors, Lloyd Cantley, Al George, Tom Coffman, Andy Rees, Bob Colvin, Terry Strom, Alp Ikizler, Mary Leonard, and Neil Powe, brought powerful and discriminating talent to complex fields of renal science and translational medicine. Jim Smith, our staff editor, wrote all of the highlights and rewrote titles and abstracts of original submissions to make our published material more readable, and Bonnie O’Brien, our ever-hovering managing editor, once again suffered patiently the painful training of novices for which we were eternally grateful.

All editors struggling for firmer footholds have a strange sense of inadequacy, and in our work we were no different. As a group, we set out to transform JASN in thoughtful ways, making the journal higher impact, more readable and crisp, and thinner to showcase the very best science to perspicacious readers. In the process, we hopefully succeeded in some small way in making JASN a pinnacle outlet for nephrology.

The unexpected challenge of editorship is finding attentive reviewers evenly split in their certainty over a particular manuscript and having to make a lonely decision. To the dismay of authors, we had no choice but to reject many good papers (including one of my own) in order to advance very best work. The adjudication of limited space by a journal editor, to paraphrase Holly Smith, is the art of providing an equitable distribution of poverty and gently nudging unhappy authors toward an equality of dissatisfaction, Talleyrand’s definition of diplomacy. In this I am sure we succeeded.

Our authors and dedicated reviewers provided us with many moments of sober reflection and sometimes mirth; my particular favorites of the latter were the unexpected arrival of a 138-page rebuttal letter to reviewer comments (don’t do that), the giddiness of receiving a startling new discovery in our inbox, initial submissions written in foreign languages, and summary conclusions over-reaching for that arcane transom of certainty. Likewise, many authors fretted over sharing more data supporting their very best ideas, forgetting the old axiom that if the ideas were really that good, one would still have to cram them down other people’s throats to gain acceptance.

There has been much debate in recent years whether science in nephrology is on the decline, and by extension, JASN is just the healthiest horse in the glue factory. I don’t agree. Everything we know about the kidney started somewhere in a laboratory, and nephrology is still a vast, provocative, and rich scientific discipline limited only by our ability to rapidly translate basic research to the bedside. More well-done clinical trials would clearly brighten our arc.

We wish Karl Nath and his new associate editors a prosperous journey into the future.

DISCLOSURES

None.

The Kielin/Chordin-Like Protein Checkpoint Constitutes a System of Checks and Balances in CKD

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